A WOMAN'S PLACE: DECOLONIZING FEMININITY WITHIN AMERICAN INDIAN REPRESENTATIONS OF WOMEN IN EASTERN NORTH AMERICAN MUSEUMS

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Abstract

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Representation of indigenous cultures in North American history museums has been contentious since the early nineteenth century, due to the unauthorized housing and display of indigenous artifacts, and the scientific othering of Native peoples through anthropological study. With the passage of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act in 1990, the increasing involvement of indigenous communities in the care and curation of their material culture and their stories has come to reflect a greater awareness of the shared authority of indigenous peoples and museum professionals in the sharing of their histories with the general public in the twenty-first century. Despite this progress, however, representations of the individualism and significance of Native women in cultivating their societies has been marginalized for the greater part of the twentieth century. Eurocentric perspectives of indigenous societies have long diminished the prominence of Native women in governing and maintaining matrilineal kinship networks.

This study explores how the decolonization processes necessary for fostering more inclusive representations and understandings of these histories are enacted within

American Indian. Museum professionals across each of these three institutions were selected in order to conduct a comparative analysis of the ways in which each of these public historians engage with and educate the general public. Respondents from each of the institutions were interviewed and asked to respond to a set of questions regarding the methodologies and approaches that each institution takes in teaching indigenous histories to both academic and general audiences of diverse backgrounds, with specific attention to how the agency of Native women is represented within interpretations of these tribal cultural histories. Analysis of the responses demonstrated that a variety of social and economic factors influence the manner in which museum professionals engage with the curation of exhibition content and the interpretation of indigenous cultures to general audiences in a contemporary context. The findings of this study indicate that the museum professionals at each of these three institutions are keenly aware of the manner by which the tribal histories they represent are communicated with general audiences in the present, and of how the display of contemporary content enables them to make conscious efforts to decolonize antiquated historical interpretations of those histories. These contemporary North American history museums respond to the limited representation of Native women by portraying the strength and integrity of Native women in the formation and longevity of their heritage in the present.

Acknowledgements

Writing and conducting research have been solitary endeavors for the past year, however, I have been fortunate enough to have garnered the continual support of my professors and the friendship of my colleagues to lessen my isolation throughout what has proven to be a lengthy, but incredibly rewarding and enriching, process. I have benefited greatly from working with talented scholars and museum professionals throughout this past year, as both enabled me to conceptualize the professional network that I find myself becoming a part of, as well as my place within it.

My gratitude will forever be indebted to the professors that have so diligently served as my thesis committee, for without them, this research would not have been achievable. Their passion for historical learning and their compassion for guiding students in their professional development have instilled within me a strong work ethic and an empathy for the advocation of marginalized histories. The historical training that I have received from each of my committee members over the years that I have known them has fostered within me an even greater love for learning, as well as a desire to engage in the teaching and sharing of history with others.

My thesis chairperson, Dr. Andrea Burns, has been especially instrumental in fostering the majority of my undergraduate and graduate academic successes at Appalachian State University. Her continual support and guidance has inspired me to pursue a career in public history, and has instilled within me a greater understanding of the ways in which I can contribute my knowledge and passion to the formation of inclusive social histories in my prospective professional life. She has always gone above and beyond to aid me in all endeavors, and has

into graduate school, and for the mental and emotional strength that she helped me to foster throughout my development into the professional realm of academia.

I wish to extend warmest thanks to one of the members of my thesis committee, Dr. Allison Fredette, for her continual support throughout the research phase of this process. It was she that has encouraged me to embrace the power that women hold in shaping academia, and has served as a positive role model for me in this regard throughout my graduate career at Appalachian State University. She has effectively served a role in aiding me on my journey as a future educator, by reinforcing in me my capacity and ability to make a positive difference in the lives of other students of history that are to come. Her kindness and guidance throughout the entirety of this process has enabled me to enter boldly into a field of history that is rich with potential, and to recognize the role that I can serve as a developing public historian in shaping future feminist scholarship within my professional career.

Another of the members of my thesis committee for whom I possess a great deal of respect is Dr. Timothy Silver, to whom I owe my emboldened cynicism and ability to critically analyze historiography for the truth. His continuous support and willingness to enable my research reinforce for me just how fortunate I have been in being able to cultivate my professional development within a highly positive learning environment under the care of seasoned professionals. He has been an inspiration to me for many years. I am indebted to him for the years of advice and wisdom that he has passed onto me throughout my academic career at Appalachian State University.

Because of the nature of this research, I had the opportunity to interview a number of both Native museum professionals and one non-Native professional, who are actively working to dispel myths surrounding American Indian Nations and their cultures within mainstream modern

American society. Their perspectives added a personal component to this research subject that an analysis of relevant historiography alone could not have given justice to within a contemporary historical context otherwise. I have great appreciation for each of the individuals that I interviewed during the research process: Mrs. Sky Sampson, Mrs. Alisha Locklear Monroe, Mrs. Nancy Strickland Fields, and Dr. David W. Penney; their time was invaluable in the culmination of this research.

It has been an absolute privilege to engage with each of these professionals throughout the various stages of my research journey, and I am indescribably grateful for the time, knowledge, and formative experiences that they have given me within the final stages of my academic graduate career. Their willingness to collaborate with me in the completion of this research has enabled me to take monumental steps into becoming a professional public historian.

Finally, I wish to thank my parents for their unending love, support, and encouragement throughout the course of both my undergraduate and graduate studies. The dedication and desire that I possess for learning was fostered from an early age, and I am indebted to them for continually reinforcing within me the importance of obtaining my formal education.

Dedication

This research and the findings thereof are dedicated first and foremost to my parents, who instilled within me a love for learning from an early age, a passion which has only intensified within my adult life as a developing historian. I am indebted to them for the considerable amounts of unyielding support, encouragement, and guidance they have given me throughout my life, as well as their unconditional love. Moreover, this work is also dedicated to my extended family, who have reinforced for me the value of possessing both a strong work ethic and a kind heart.

Additionally, I wish to dedicate this work to the instructors and professors of both Surry Community College and Appalachian State University who have been involved in the formation of my academic career over the course of the past six years. My hope is that the completion of this work brings each of the professionals that have cultivated and continually refined my love for learning throughout my academic journey a sense of fulfillment, for it is to those whom I am humbled and fortunate enough to know that I dedicate my successes.

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INTRODUCTION

Unsettling the American Consciousness: Past and Present Interpretations of Southeast American Indian Nations

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"Learn what the community needs; fit the museum to those needs."[1] Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, North American history museums have chronically struggled to identify with and fulfill the cultural needs of the communities they serve. While curatorial staff have become increasingly aware of the need to address the social and cultural needs of diverse audiences, many institutions still fail to align with the perspectives and values of contemporary audiences. Methodologies for exploring cultural diversity through exhibitions is an ongoing thread regarding historical interpretation within the profession of public history, and encompasses many social and political debates among those professionals and communities involved in their creation. North American history museums and living history sites have particularly marginalized indigenous peoples to a degree which has encouraged the reconstruction of curatorial processes and pedagogical approaches that that institutions must participate in in order to make themselves and their content culturally relevant to the contemporary portrayal of indigenous histories. To ensure the relevance of their institutions in fulfilling the cultural needs of their audiences, public historians working within American Indian history museums and living history sites are continually engaging in processes that will enable them to decolonize their methodologies for interpreting and representing tribal histories to and for diverse audiences. Only through these decolonization processes can museums effectively

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[1] John Cotton Dana, Director, Newark Museum, 1917, cited in McNulty, 1992; Moira G. Simpson, "Voices of Authorship," in *Making Representations: Museums in the Post-Colonial Era*, rev. ed., (London: Routledge, 2001), 51.

present to the general public cultural content which serves to highlight the resilience and individualism of tribal nations within the collective formation of American historical narratives.

In *Making Representations: Museums in the Post-Colonial Era*, Moira G. Simpson responds to the above mentioned quote spoken by John Cotton Dana, the Founder of the American Association of Museums, by acknowledging how the inclusion of marginalized communities in the representation of their own histories has steadily increased within the twenty-first century:

> A major development in this regard has been the increased involvement of members of a community in the interpretation of their culture and history through various processes of consultation, guest curatorship and community exhibitions. Exhibitions organised in consultation with the communities represented can provide a means of counteracting many of the problematic aspects of exhibitions which have drawn criticism in the past. They enable those represented to contribute information which reflects their perspectives and concerns and demonstrates their survival as a unique cultural group within a society which often shows little regard for the distinctiveness of their cultural identity.[2]

While collaborative opportunities exist for curatorial staff to foster connections with indigenous peoples in the representation of their histories, the inclusion of community perspectives within exhibition content is necessarily a selective process. Simpson notes that, "one of the problems facing curatorial staff when embarking upon such collaborative processes is negotiating the often difficult path through community politics and relationships to identify those who can speak for their communities."[3] Effective communication with leaders of tribal communities will not only broaden the focus of exhibition content within museums that represent indigenous histories, but will also reinforce for indigenous communities that they possess a shared authority in the curation and interpretation of their histories to the general public.

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[2] Ibid, 51.
[3] Ibid.

The field of public history serves as an effective medium through which Native Americans can take on an active role in the portrayal of their histories by enacting a shared authority with its practitioners, most optimally, museum professionals. Scholarship regarding both academic and popular conceptions of the influence of Native peoples in the formation of North American ethnohistories throughout the twentieth century provides a foundational basis for which the authority of tribal communities in the representation of their histories within institutions can be interpreted and recognized within the twenty-first century. In practice, public historians cultivate these cultural interpretations through participating in collaborative museum curation and expanding upon historiography regarding how tribal histories are displayed and communicated to the general public.

Distinctions between perceptions of native cultures by either general or academic audiences can be examined within a variety of North American ethnohistorical works regarding how outsiders have, and continue to, interact with native cultures in a contemporary context. In addressing this expansive scholarship, I will incorporate the reactionary responses of both indigenous or native and non-native writers within these portrayals of native cultures and how they have persisted by adapting throughout the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries. Analyzing this broad variety of perspectives has enabled me to deconstruct the processes involved in the representation of native peoples, their histories, and their cultures in museum settings. The focus of this research centers around revealing the agency of native peoples, specifically that of Native American women, in the crafting and telling of their own histories, and how their involvement has fluctuated over time in North American museums and historic sites throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This study thus influenced me to investigate the ways by which Native American women are represented within public history

settings in Eastern North America in the present, as well as assert that these public history settings are limited in their representations of the agency which native women held within their societies both in the past and the present. Simultaneously, I will address the ways in which public historians, specifically museum curators and museum educators, are engaging in pedagogical practices which will expand upon this social history and serve in the positive learning experiences of multiple audiences.

This thesis incorporates methods of traditional museum management in order to broaden the professional networks which public historians communicate within to engage with marginalized communities in the interpretation of their histories. Three Eastern North American museums will be examined in a comparative analysis to determine the ways in which contemporary history museums either continue to represent assimilation and reconciliation narratives of eighteenth and nineteenth century American history, or embrace more progressive dialogues which directly involve native peoples in the sharing of native histories with the general public. This research will serve as a conceptual approach for public historians seeking to represent the agency of native women in Eastern North American museums in the present, then, as each of the institutions examined within the comparative analysis have made conscious efforts to more accurately portray the individualism of tribes in cultivating and maintaining their heritages through direct collaboration with indigenous communities in the curation of their content and material culture displays. Collaboration with native peoples has become increasingly significant for museums and living history sites within the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, as public historians have come to understand that this collaboration yields more representative and encompassing depictions of tribal heritage than prior efforts based on a top-down structure devoid of shared authority with tribal communities.

This research will address the fields of Native American history, museum management and curation, gender history, environmental history, material culture, and new social history. Each of these schools of historical practice provides a framework through which to analyze how these subjects are illustrated and interact within the medium of public history. Research in areas of the humanities as well as politics and philosophy are to be represented, with special attention to how the interpretation of native identities is acknowledged by native peoples themselves. The first and second chapters of this research study address the scope of historiography relevant to one's understanding of how native and non-native persons interact with the portrayal of indigenous histories through both academic literature and physical exhibits within a museum or historic site. The third, fourth, and fifth chapters of this research serve as a conceptual approach for public historians aiming to reach multiple audiences through the approaches that each of the institutions examined within the comparative analysis take in portraying indigenous histories in a modern context. It will examine how to approach curation of a museum devoted to American Indian history by comparing the exhibit choices and artifact displays of three museums within Eastern North America, specifically in regards to two institutions in North Carolina (The Museum of the Cherokee Indian, and the Museum of the Southeast American Indian), and another in Washington, DC (The National Museum of the American Indian). Furthermore, this comparative analysis of museums will examine how Native American women are portrayed within a private and independently run institution, a university-operated institution, and a federally-funded national institution. The incorporation of oral histories collected from interviewing subjects from each of the three locations should contextualize the subject matter within a modern framework, as their perspectives of native identity in the present will aid public historians in connecting current representations of indigenous histories within these institutions

to those perspectives traditionally presented within previous scholarship within the fields of Native American ethnohistory and museum interpretation.

My purpose in collecting firsthand accounts of indigenous cultural representation within museums and institutions within the eastern United States in the present is to enable expansion of the bodies of scholarship which initially inspired this research, and to make substantial connections between the practices of North American museums of the past and the present in addition to a specific focus of the ways by which native women are represented within these public history settings. This research is meant to broadly encompass a general historiography of the subject matter and means of cultural expression exhibited by Native peoples within the scope of Indian removal and assimilation into the present day. The display of artifacts within a physical exhibit or online archives moderated and housed by museums within the eastern North American region also allows me to employ material culture as a methodology for examining and representing traditional aspects and practices of tribal histories, as well as questioning why particular objects indicate gendered roles within native societies and help to illustrate the practices and beliefs of those societies.

Lastly, this research will further examine American perceptions of tribal identities through the creation of national parks and the dispossession of tribal communities throughout the late-nineteenth and early-to mid-twentieth centuries, and how this continues to influence the American consciousness of the natural world and the peoples that alter, shape, and maintain it in the present. Within its sixth chapter, this study will incorporate environmental history and the prominence of the National Park Service in the molding of twentieth century American ecological ideologies and social thought, with specific regard to the physical and metaphysical dispossession of indigenous communities from the North American landscape. The authority of

the federal government in regulating Native use and occupation of the North American landscape forced American Indian Nations to adapt to rapidly changing environmental and social contexts throughout the late nineteenth to early and mid twentieth centuries. Prior to the twentieth century, Native communities held great authority in cultivating their physical world. Because of this, their presence can not be taken out of contemporary interpretations of the formation of national parks and pristine natural landscapes, as it was primarily by their hand that these landscapes were able to be entered in and settled upon by non-Native white Americans.[4] Understanding the presence of Native communities within these federally preserved natural environments prior to the twentieth century enables both ethnohistorians and public historians to recognize the position of national parks as natural museums that facilitate the education of predominantly non-Native Americans in their understandings of how North American landscapes were cultivated to fulfill wilderness ideals and foster tourism within the twentieth century, and into the present.

Most significantly, within its conclusion, this research will examine the psychosocial impacts of the commercialization of tribal cultures and how these processes have facilitated change within the field of public history, and by extension, North American audience understandings of Native American societies in the present. Each of the institutions studied within the comparative analysis will rationalize how significant museums are as a medium for enacting social change and civic engagement with marginalized groups, with specific attention to how indigenous peoples invoke a shared authority with museum scholars and public historians in the curation of their histories. This subject offers considerable promise in its potential to advance the fields of public history, Native American history, gender history, and new social history

[4] The picturesque aspect of North American landscapes and the opportunities those landscapes held for resource exploitation by white settlers is addressed by Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr. in *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), 92.

through an examination of material culture and oral histories in the crafting of indigenous cultures and the survivance of native women in their ability to maintain traditional gender roles and familial kinship structures in the present. This research aims to dispel stereotypical representations of indigenous cultures of the past, once highly prevalent within multiple North American history museums and living history sites, by acknowledging how these public history mediums can reverse problematic interpretations of these societies and their cultural values by directly incorporating the voices and perspectives of modern indigenous communities.[5]

[5] Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr. acknowledges the stereotypical representation of Native Americans in literature, art, and philosophy through what he refers to as "the white imagination" in *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), 71. The cultivation of this imagery in the humanities is directly relevant for understanding how American social thought revolved around racist conceptions of American Indians throughout the twentieth century, and how these undercurrents continue to complicate Native realities within the twenty-first century.

CHAPTER ONE

Academic and Public Spheres of History: How Decolonization Narratives are Becoming Prioritized in the Twenty-First Century

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Within the broad array of academic scholarship surrounding Native American history and American ethnohistories from the twentieth century, the writings of historian Calvin Martin provide a foundational basis upon which to broaden social historical understandings of indigenous experiences within both the recent past and the present. His 1987 essay, "The Metaphysics of Writing Indian-White History," addresses the stereotypes that historians often act with in recording and understanding Eurocentric interpretations of native peoples, primarily that of interpreting documentation through ethnocentric biases. Martin attempts to deconstruct the narratives of American Indian history, asserting that the dominance of an Anglo interpretation of native histories and people "has subtly transgressed its explanatory boundaries to pose as the sole or only valid or only serious explanation of what transpired when Indian and white met."[6] Separating a Western worldview from one's interpretations of native histories necessitates an open-mindedness on behalf of the social historian, because to truly reinterpret and depict native histories, one must consider their behaviors and beliefs within a cosmological realm.[7]

The Christianization of native societies rendered indigenous peoples' belief in natural mysticism invalid, but only to a small degree. The total assimilation of indigenous inhabitants proved unsuccessful in most pre-colonial and settler societies throughout the seventeenth and

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[6] Calvin Martin, "The Metaphysics of Writing Indian-White History," in *The American Indian and the Problem of History*, ed. Calvin Martin, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 28.
[7] Ibid, 31.

eighteenth centuries.[8] Martin thereby summarizes that European interpretations of indigenous peoples' conversion to Christianity as a civilizing process overshadowed their resistance to conform to Western ideologies, by necessitating a dichotomy of belief systems that directly invalidated those of indigenous societies.[9]

Historian Neal Salisbury responds to Martin's findings by supporting Martin's assertion of the civilizing process of native peoples and how this was recorded from the perspectives of Europeans. In "American Indians and American History," Salisbury suggests that historians must understand both Native American and European societies as transitory and evolving entities with a continual historical record. To do so, he notes that historians must proceed with "laying aside the assumption that linguistic, cultural, and political boundaries served to isolate Native Americans from one another until Europeans came along and obliged them to interact."[10] Salisbury points out that historians often fall into making assumptions about indigenous societies because of a lack of concrete evidence, and warns that historians should not create a monolithic narrative from the pieces of supporting evidence they are able to find.

In his essay, "Revision and Reversion," Native scholar Vine Deloria, Jr. examines classifications of native histories by separating historians writing on various subjects within the field, namely emotional responses to historical events. Deloria, Jr. explains how, "we should probably classify people who write on Indian-white relations as revisionists and reversionists: those who bring more data into their schemes of interpretation and thereby gain additional

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[8] Considerable resistance efforts on the part of indigenous peoples to fully comply with and adhere to principles of Christian doctrine can be examined through the works of Karen Anderson in *Chain Her By One Foot: The Subjugation of Native Women in Seventeenth-Century New France*, (New York: Routledge, 1993), of Gunlög Fur in *A Nation of Women: Gender and Colonial Encounters Among the Delaware Indians*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), and of Susan Sleeper-Smith in *Indian Women and French Men: Rethinking Cultural Encounter in the Western Great Lakes*, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001).

[9] Calvin Martin, "The Metaphysics of Writing Indian-White History," 31.

[10] Neal Salisbury, "American Indians and American History," in *The American Indian and the Problem of History*, ed. Calvin Martin, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 47.

precision in describing the situation, and those who revert to older, more accepted ways of describing historical events without [further examination]."[11] The problem that students of American history possess in trying to comprehend the complexities of indigenous cultures arises from the methods of instruction that educators employ throughout primary and secondary institutions. Deloria, Jr. notes that, "by the time we recognize that the comfortable and uniform version of human experiences we have learned is not accurate, we have already taken much misinformation and misinterpretation into ourselves and have great difficulty in separating fact from mythology."[12] In terms of the massive body of scholarship on Native American ethnohistory that existed in the 1980s and continues to broaden, Vine Deloria, Jr.'s perspective on Native American histories is that these more accurate representations of indigenous cultures made by progressive scholars must be brought into the forefront of American popular culture in order to become most effective in dismantling Eurocentric interpretations of indigenous contributions to the creation and solidification of American civilization.

Michael Dorris' essay, "Indians on the Shelf" offers a cynical view of the mysticism surrounding Native American ethnohistories, specifically in regards to the nature by which popular stereotypes within American culture influence native peoples themselves. In order to confront these stereotypes, he suggests that historians must bridge beyond interpretations of written documentation alone and interpret oral histories and religious rituals with the same degree of seriousness.[13] To better contextualize Dorris' perspective, Angela Cavendar Wilson supports that the field of American Indian ethnohistory fails to employ the greatest resource it could possibly possess, that of the perspectives of indigenous peoples themselves. As a native

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[11] Vine Deloria, Jr., "Revision and Reversion," in *The American Indian and the Problem of History*, ed. Calvin Martin, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 89.
[12] Ibid, 90.
[13] Michael Dorris, "Indians on the Shelf," in *The American Indian and the Problem of History*, ed. Calvin Martin, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

historian, Wilson expresses her disappointment in ethnohistories of the past which failed to incorporate the oral histories of native societies. She explains how, "the area of American Indian history has been dominated by non-Indian historians who use non-Indian sources to create non-Indian interpretations about American Indians and their pasts."[14] She conjectures further that these historians have rarely bothered to obtain the opinions of those Indians whose culture they have depicted, and fail to further conduct research which would enrich their narrative via the voices of indigenous peoples in the present day. Wilson emphasizes that oral histories must "retain their integrity, [be] considered within a larger cultural context, and [reflect] a native perspective of the American Indian past," which can be presented in addition to non-native interpretations of the same cultural group.[15] Historians must present these stories as stand-alone accounts and be willing to learn from them. Dorris argues that in order to best understand and depict the histories of both past and modern native societies, native peoples must be demythologized and removed from the realm of Western retrospection.

Dorris further suggests that an even greater mysticism surrounds native women than does native men, because native women increasingly begin to be depicted in written documentation through Western ideals of femininity. Indigenous and enslaved women were often written about in a manner that reinforced Eurocentric standards of beauty by contradicting their observations of these women from those of their own societies, effectively othering indigenous and enslaved women for their cultural differences and physical appearances.[16] Christian ideals, foundations,

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[14] Angela Cavendar Wilson, "Power of the Spoken Word: Native Oral Traditions in American Indian History," in *Rethinking American Indian History*, ed. Donald L. Fixico, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997), 101.

[15] Ibid, 111.

[16] Eurocentric standards and ideals of femininity, beauty, and social status as projected onto indigenous and enslaved women are analyzed and interpreted through the works of Camilla Townsend in *Pocahontas and the Powhatan Dilemma*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 2005), of Jennifer Morgan in "'Some Could Suckle over Their Shoulder': Male Travelers, Female Bodies, and the Gendering of Racial Ideology, 1500-1770,'" *William and Mary Quarterly*

and world views must be removed from one's perception of the belief systems of native peoples prior to European settlement, as these principles are what categorizes and comprises much of primary documentation of the cultural practices and belief systems of native peoples. What was regarded as foreign to European settlers was recorded as such, and therefore lessened in significance in comparison to the cultural practices of Europeans. As this has been the case for centuries, historic documentation has necessarily yielded a limited perspective of native peoples. That which has been documented of indigenous cultures during the period of European exploration and conquest was done so in a manner that othered the spiritual and fundamental beliefs of those they encountered throughout their expeditions. Gender norms, in particular, within native societies greatly differed from those in Europe; therefore, the degree to which native women in particular are represented within documentation from the seventeenth-and-eighteenth-centuries pales in comparison to how native men are represented.

Among scholarship concentrated upon gender biases and the roles of native women during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Theda Perdue examines the effects of European contact in influencing Cherokee societies and their conceptions of gender in *Cherokee Women: Gender and Cultural Change, 1700-1835*. Aimed directly at highlighting the ways in which Cherokee culture was resistant to change, Perdue's interpretation presents native women with agency and authority, a significant facet of social history. Amidst being confronted with the gender constructions of paternalistic societies, Perdue maintains that the gendered structure of Cherokee culture remained rather unaltered for the better part of the eighteenth-century and enabled them to adapt European practices into their already-existing belief system.[17] Cherokee

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54:1 (January 1997), 167-92, and of Tiya Miles in "The Narrative of Nancy, a Cherokee Woman," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 29:2/3 (2008), 59-80.

[17] Theda Perdue, *Cherokee Women: Gender and Cultural Change, 1700-1835*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998).

culture in its entirety was profoundly affected during the eighteenth-century by white settlement, in terms of reorganizing its means of trade, its legal structure, and its agricultural production.

Perdue and Michael D. Green elaborate upon the ways in which femininity within Cherokee culture was regarded by the United States government prior to 1835 in *The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents*. Within the first chapter, Perdue and Green reference the 1835 Census in regards to the misrepresentation of female Cherokee Natives residing east of the Mississippi:

> the Census of 1835 contains the names of 2,637 Cherokees whom the census taker assumed to be the heads of households. The census recorded a total of 16,542 Cherokees, of whom 77.27 percent were 'full blooded,' 201 intermarried whites, and 1,592 African American slaves...these particular people lived in the Long Savannah community of what became Hamilton County.[18]

Wealth was stratified within these types of slaveholding and nonslaveholding communities, and cultural values varies among its residents. These communities were known for wheat production, especially on the part of Cherokee Natives. With wheat production as a variable for analyzing demographics within these communities, Perdue and Green suggest that religious influence on part of Europeanized missionaries must be taken into account when attempting to understand what the 1835 Census reveals about society in that time. Perdue and Green note how, "missionaries and other promoters of 'civilization' encouraged the Cherokees to grow wheat because they considered wheat, the grain most widely grown in Europe, to be a 'civilized' crop and far preferable to corn, a grain native to the Americas."[19] Most did not comply with this rationale, which is reflective of Cherokee refusal to adopt Anglo-American agricultural practices during the mid-nineteenth-century.

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[18] Theda Perdue and Michael D. Green, "Cherokee Civilization," in *The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents*, 2nd ed., (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2005), 50.
[19] Ibid, 51-52.

division and shifted political power to men."[22] During the removal crisis of 1817-1819, however, Cherokee women asserted their political authority. In 1817-1818, Perdue and Green note how "women's councils presented petitions to the National Council, which was composed solely of men. Nancy Ward seems to have inspired and led those women's councils. Ward was a War Woman, a title traditionally given awarded to women who distinguished themselves while accompanying war parties to cook food, carry water, and perform other gender-specific tasks."[23] Because of her prominent status, Ward represented the authority of a matrilineal kinship in making decisions in political matters prior to the twentieth century. The impact of their petitions is difficult to discern, as the Cherokee were forced to cede land in 1817 and 1819, but it is at least understood that their actions had a temporary impact upon the cession of further allotments of land in 1835.[24]

They petitioned again. Perdue and Green further explain how, "in the second petition, the women also addressed the issue of allotment, that is, dividing Cherokee land into separate tracts and assigning (or allotting) those tracts to individuals. This would have been a dramatic departure from the Cherokee practice of holding land in common."[25] This belief system enabled those citizens who belonged to the community to use common land if it was found unoccupied, but that those who did occupy common land were unable to sell the tracts that they used, so that it would remain within the larger whole of Cherokee land. Encroaching settler presence forced the Cherokee to reconceptualize their landscape, claiming ownership of the natural world as they had not before American settlement increased at a massive rate. In claiming territory for the sake of cultural continuity, the Cherokee not only rationalized ownership of the natural world within

[22] Theda Perdue and Michael D. Green, "The Cherokee Debate," in *The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents*, 2nd ed., (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2005), 129-130.
[23] Ibid, 130.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.

Not only does the 1835 Census reveal telling information about how Native and Anglo-American views differed in regards to the landscape, but it also reveals underlying gender biases of the census taker, who was non-Native. Perdue and Green point out that, "five members of the Long Savannah community listed as heads of household were women--Lizy Ratley, Ootiah, Peggy Waters, Polly Gritts, and Betsey Goins...they produced sixty, fifteen, and one hundred bushels of corn, respectively. Nevertheless, the census suggests that no farmers over eighteen, [lived in their households]."[20] The most probable reason for this, Perdue and Green conclude, is that "Anglo-Americans in the nineteenth-century believed that a woman's proper place was in the home, not in the field. The 'cult of domesticity,' as this belief is sometimes called, may have blinded the census taker to the traditional Cherokee practice of women farming. The farmers counted on the census are men; the weavers and the spinners are women."[21] The agricultural practices of Cherokee women contradicted the expectations and conceptions of their Anglo-American counterparts, and so complicates this narrative, as we are only given a partial rendering of what the Long Savannah community was like in 1835. Although several other factors need to be taken into account in the interpretation of this document, the 1835 U.S. Census supports evidence of Anglo-American gender biases towards Native peoples during the nineteenth-century.

Perdue and Green also address discrepancies between the roles of men and women in holding political power and participating in land cession debates. They mention that, "in the public debates over removal, or indeed any political issue, the voices of Cherokee women were largely absent. Traditionally, men conducted foreign affairs while women attended to domestic ones. The increasing importance of war and trade in the eighteenth-century had magnified this

[20] Ibid, 52.
[21] Ibid.

their own ideology, but they defended their right to keep their ancestral lands out of non-Native hands.

Perdue and Green examine the role of women in defending tribal land ownership rights in a series of petitions posed to the National Council on May 2, 1817 and June 30, 1818. In the first petition, prominent Cherokee women address chiefs and warriors of the council: "our beloved children and head men of the Cherokee Nation, we address you warriors in council. We have raised all of you on the land which we now have, which God gave us to inhabit and raise provisions."[26] The women then acknowledge their fears of further parceling Cherokee land, asserting that, "we know that our country has once been extensive, but by repeated sales has become circumscribed to a small track, and [we] never have thought it our duty to interfere in the disposition of it till now...Your mothers, your sisters ask and beg of you not to part with any more of our land."[27] Again, on June 30, 1818, Cherokee women pleaded with the prospective generation to reconsider their decisions in the selling of Cherokee land. Cherokee women reinforce within the second petition their reluctance in ceeding more land, noting that, "we have heard with painful feelings that the bounds of the land we now possess are to be drawn into very narrow limits. The land was given to us by the Great Spirit above as our common right to raise our children upon, and to make support for our rising generations."[28] For Cherokee society, the ownership of ancestral lands was integral to the maintenance of tradition, as an aspect of their identity itself was grounded in their relationship with the natural world. Each of these documents emphasizes the significant role that women played in the maintenance and continuity of Cherokee heritage, as well as displays their fears of American encroachment, for the purchase

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[26] Cherokee Women, "Petition" (May 2, 1817), in Theda Perdue and Michael D. Green, "The Cherokee Debate" in *The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents*, 2nd ed., (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2005), 131.
[27] Ibid, 131-132.
[28] Cherokee Women, "Petition" (June 30, 1818), in Theda Perdue and Michael D. Green, "The Cherokee Debate" in *The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents*, 2nd ed., (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2005), 132-133.

and settlement of tribal lands threatened to undermine and replace traditional Cherokee cultural pathways.

In his epilogue, "Time and the American Indian," indigenous studies scholar Calvin Martin connects methods of interpreting native histories traditional to the 1950s and prior with modern ones, noting the gradual but mostly universal progress of revisionist elements within new social historians' renderings of indigenous ethnohistories. Martin addresses that there are and have been "people of myth and people of history. In North America, this translated into the people of myth trying to comprehend and adjust to the people of history, and vice versa. Or, just as correctly, the people of biological orientation attempting to adjust to the people of anthropological orientation, and vice versa."[29] The progression of crafting inclusive and representative social histories is prevalent within North American ethnohistories from the 1960s to the present. Beginnings of this progression were attempted through the anthropological work of Marshall Sahlins in *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities*.

Like Martin, Sahlins experiments with the assumption that indigenous peoples were childlike and dependant upon knowledge which could only be acquired through their interactions with European explorers. Sahlins' examination of English and Hawaiian cultural exchanges in the mid-to-late eighteenth-century serves as a case study for the evaluation of early North American ethnohistories. Upon their introduction to British sailors, the Makahiki exchanged items of material culture with the men, as per spiritual tradition. Consecutive interaction with the Makahiki proved fatal for Captain James Cook, as he was ceremoniously murdered per another aspect of spiritual tradition.[30] The tone with which Sahlins presents this account is problematic,

[29] Calvin Martin, "Time and the American Indian," in *The American Indian and the Problem of History*, ed. Calvin Martin, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 195.
[30] Marshall Sahlins, "Captain James Cook; or The Dying God" in *Islands of History*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), 109-110, 122-123, 127-128.

however, because as inclusive as he aims to be by inputting anthropological analyses of this Polynesian culture, he inherently others members of this native society, representing the values and religious beliefs of this tribal community as social taboo.[31] A mysticization of indigenous belief systems thereby necessitates a differentiation of cultural rationalizations, as one is often portrayed as contradictory or secondary to the other in comparison to dominant cultural perspectives.

Comparing native peoples to mythic beings, Martin argues that the ways by which the cultural practices of native societies have been interpreted prior to 1960 is through the very conscious cultivation of creation narratives on part of native peoples, which have often taken the form of oral legends.[32] He further illustrates how aspects of native societies have historically been mythologized in addressing the ways by which agricultural and hunting methods, craft making, and communal trade were regarded by outsiders. Martin acknowledges how these practices were at first regarded as mysterious or strange, but then dramatically altered following regular European interaction and gradual settlement, noting, "they adapted to changes in their habitat, they selectively borrowed ideas and technology introduced from points near and far, and they have retained this capacity up to the present."[33] Martin emphasizes that:

> the changes which they made in their lifestyle, including their technological inventory and general material culture, were fit within their overarching mythic structure. Change, in whatever form it occurred or appeared—whether as steel fishhook, steel trap, steel knife, or copper kettle, or whether it was the concept of maize agriculture deriving [from] Mexico

[31] Abby Williams, "Redefining Impressions of Social History: Examining the Agency of Marginalized Groups," (essay, Appalachian State University, 2017), 3.
[32] Calvin Martin, "Time and the American Indian," 196-197.
[33] Ibid, 197.

was reconciled within their already existing system of cosmological beliefs.[34] Technological advancements or materials that were not traditionally associated with indigenous peoples thus became attributes of their greater cultural framework, as native societies were uprooted and influenced to change as a result of interactions with foreign powers. Regardless, native societies only incorporated these values if they did not deter or degrade the continuity of their native belief systems. European technologies and cultural practices did not solely replace those of native societies, but rather served to broaden them in complexity.[35]

Yet another aspect of the traditional mysticism surrounding the cultures of native societies is an intimate association with nature. Martin explains that, "the forces operating in Nature, and the lives of animals, are thought to be changeless; the elements and creatures with which these people so strongly identify, and the myriad cycles they witness in this grand symphony, are the same, in behavior and form and power, as they were at Creation."[36] By adhering to these observations and practices, Martin concludes that native societies formed patterns of symbolic representation for their relationship to their environment and thus mythologized that relationship as a way to conceive of how their societies came into existence. Because native perceptions of the natural world were rationalized in a conceptual and spiritual manner, Martin argues that humans in general are motivated by methods of symbolic thinking and employ representative objects and concepts within their cultures quite naturally. The conflict that historians face in writing more accurate ethnohistories of native peoples is that of being able to place them neatly within the same cultural landscape as European ancestors and descendants.

After decades of enculturation processes, American Indian histories have been tempered with perspectives indicative of the psychological impacts of removal and later, assimilation.

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[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid, 197-198.
[36] Ibid, 199.

Most commonly overlooked within American Indian scholarship of the eighteenth-century and prior is that of the authority possessed by women within indigenous and western societies. More so than men, perhaps, native women were forced to abide by gender constructions of two vastly different societies simultaneously. The customary roles of native women did not fit within the traditional framework of Anglo Saxon constructions of gender, therefore native women were given the choice to adhere to cultural gender norms or to accept those of western society. The reality of these interactions proved that instead there was a blending of these two belief systems, with native women eventually advocating the prominence that religious favor earned them with their European counterparts while retaining their customary values that awarded them prominence within significant decision-making sectors of their domestic lives.[37]

In "The Historiography of American Indian and Other Western Women," Glenda Riley suggests that up until around 1984, the historiography of Indian women was vastly overlooked when compiling writings of the American West. Traditionally, only the experiences of Anglo Saxon western women were recognized as the feminist movement and the field of social history came to prominence. Gradually, attention turned to the scholarship of women's experiences as an increase in material sources became available. Riley explains that, "as emerging historians of western women defied the establishment, amassed their source materials, and wrote revisionist histories, they aspired to restore women's well-deserved place in western history. Because much of western history focused upon Anglo westward expansion, this restoration necessitated proving

[37] The resilience of indigenous women in retaining their traditional gender roles and the authority that they possessed within their societies is examined throughout Ann Marie Plane's *Colonial Intimacies: Indian Marriage in Early New England*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), Kathleen M. Brown's "The Anglo-Algonquian Gender Frontier," from *Negotiators of Change: Historical Perspectives on Native American Women*, ed. Nancy Shoemaker, (London: Routledge, 1995. pp. 26-48), and Kathleen DuVal's "Indian Intermarriage and Métissage in Colonial Louisiana," *William and Mary Quarterly* 65:2 (April 2008), 267-304. In particular, Allan Greer examines the influence of Catholicism upon blending of cultural beliefs and gender norms in *Mohawk Saint: Catherine Tekakwitha and the Jesuits*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

and assessing the presence of women in the Anglo westward movement."[38] Historians focusing on western women's experiences have been disregarding traditional stereotypes associated with women in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, namely that of the woman as a civilized nurturer, as a result of the increasing nature of the feminist movement in America during the 1960s and 1970s. Riley mentions that emerging historians of western women began "replacing them instead with more factual women who participated in everything from running a farm to politics, to the paid labor market."[39]

In expanding their definitions of western peoples, social historians were tasked with addressing the extent to which Native American women contributed to their societies, despite being members of a restrictive social system. The degree by which Native American women were exploited within their societies became yet another facet of this analysis, with special attention being given to the representation of individuals who actively shaped and acted within their cultures. Participation in labor protests, teaching, shaping educational policies, and innovating agricultural processes are some of the potential avenues which social historians of this era have and continue to explore.[40] From the mid-1980s to the present, historians of women and American Indians were aware of the significance of women in shaping greater narratives of American history, but struggled with incorporating the histories of Indian women within that same framework.[41]

Riley also acknowledges that, "historians are pursuing instead an analysis and understanding of the ways in which women exercised agency and resisted 'oppression'" from

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[38] Glenda Riley, "The Historiography of American Indian and Other Western Women," in *Rethinking American Indian History*, ed. Donald L. Fixico, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997), 45.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid, 47.
[41] Ibid, 48.

Anglo Saxon men, most specifically through their refusal to abandon cultural norms.[42] In particular, she recognizes the value of research conducted by Carol Green Devens in regards to the agency of indigenous women of the Great Lakes region.[43] Devens found that "women exerted their will and enforced their decisions by resisting and rejecting missionaries' offerings and inducements."[44] Furthermore, Riley determines from Devens' findings that "these women struggled and resisted in their own way, by picking and choosing, taking what suited them and rejecting what appeared to threaten their position, status, or culture. Their agency was no less forceful for its subtlety."[45] Typically, historians have relied on rationalizing the authorities and behaviors of western women based upon the customary roles they served within their families. Western women were portrayed in a manner that adhered to traditional gender norms of Anglo Saxon ideologies, only enacting their authority within the domestic sphere and within acceptable boundaries of how these women were expected to exemplify qualities of civility and femininity. Because generations of scholarship on western women exists, Riley addresses how the context of their research raises issues exploring "how did gender shape the subject's life and work, what female values did she accept or reject, how did women's culture affect her work or causes, were her actions feminist in tone and result, why might she have supported or disavowed feminism, why might she have adopted or ignored other causes of the era, [or] what kind of a role model did she provide" for others?[46] In view of the continuously broadening body of scholarship of western women's history, Riley concludes that, "as a consequence of the growing emphasis on women's agency, a new definition of power is emerging: one can exercise power not only

[42] Ibid, 51.
[43] Ibid, 52; Carol Devens, *Countering Colonization: Native American Women and Great Lakes Missions, 1630-1900*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), 119.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid, 53.

through action, but also by refusing to accept or cooperate."[47] Progressive interpretations of gendered relations within both western and non-western societies could influence the reconceptualizing of historians' views of power relationships between men and women of multiple cultural backgrounds throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries.

In response to Riley's assertion of the prominence of western women in decision-making processes relegated to the domestic sphere, Theda Perdue broadens examinations of gendered power relations within non-western societies by emphasizing the roles of native women within indigenous societies in contrast to those of their western counterparts. Perdue's "Writing the Ethnohistory of Native Women" begins with an anecdote emphasizing the prominence of women in political decision-making in Cherokee society. As she writes, "in 1757 Attakullakulla, a distinguished Cherokee headman, appeared before the South Carolina governor's council. Gazing around the room, he appeared startled, and he asked the governor why there were no women in attendance...Attakullakulla was accustomed to seeing women in council meetings and hearing their views."[48] His assumption, therefore, that women should have been present in a council meeting of political leaders was a sound one according to the parameters of Cherokee tradition. Women held very prominent roles within Cherokee societies that were central to decision-making for the tribe, as they were matrilineally structured. The fact that each were confused by the absence of women in the governor's council meeting emphasizes the degree to which constructions of gender were not universally defined. Perdue asserts that, "since policies, both native and colonial, rested on assumptions about the people toward whom they were directed, gender must have figured into the equation. The absence of women in the South

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[47] Ibid, 57.

[48] Theda Perdue, "Writing the Ethnohistory of Native Women," in *Rethinking American Indian History*, ed. Donald L. Fixico, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997), 73.

Carolina council, after all, helped shape Attakullakulla's view of the British; his expectations shaped British views of Cherokees."[49]

This aspect of gender expectations thus led ethnohistorians to further examine nineteenth century written documentation with increased skepticism, so as to be more conscious of how assumptions made about non-European societies were mistakenly taken for historical fact. Perdue also explains how, "for this reason, ethnohistorians constantly confront the problem of how to write a people's cultural history when outsiders, and often hostile outsiders, wrote the documents on which [they] must rely."[50] She notes that, "many of the encounters that produced documents, in particular trade relations and military alliances, involved native men far more than women."[51] European missionaries and travelers were bound up within the societal constructs of their own cultures, and thus possessed expectations that men were the individuals central in decision-making processes.

Men of European descent integrated themselves within native settlements, most commonly traders and government officials who remained to marry and raise families or become involved with politics. Even so, Perdue notes that, "these men generally had little interest in native women beyond the food they produced or the sex they provided, and consequently they left few references to women or women's lives. They considered women to be less important than men, and in any event, the concerns of women were not concerns of theirs."[52] Regardless of how inquisitive European men were of the roles of women in native societies, it would have been difficult for them to observe the practices of native women enacted in daily life, as native men and women often lived and worked within separate social spheres because of an adherence to a

[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid, 73-74.
[52] Ibid, 74.

traditional sexual division of labor. Perdue explains that, "men and women performed different tasks: in most of North America, men hunted while women farmed/and or gathered."[53] Likewise, she notes that, "a woman could not fill the role of a man and remain an ordinary woman. Similarly, a man who worked alongside women in the fields crossed genders and became something other than a man."[54] Task differentiation thus created spatial separation between men and women, and even more so between men and women regarding religious and economic ceremonies.

Perdue then discusses how the recognition of separate spheres within native societies better enables anthropologists to determine which artifacts are associated with a particular gender based upon a division of labor and tools that were used and ethnohistorians to understand and interpret those differences in accordance with primary documentation.[55] From her research, Perdue notes how "such spatial, task, and tool differentiation implies that men and women knew little about each other's work and, consequently, exercised little control over it. The result is considerable gender autonomy, and the implication is a worldview in which men balance women rather than the European conception of a hierarchical universe in which men rank above women."[56] The gender norms of native societies contradicted those of European societies and were not often accurately portrayed in primary documentation, because its authors were not concerned with the affairs and behaviors of a minority group which did not directly impact their daily lives. Perdue concludes that "Anglo-American views of gender, of men and women,

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[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.
[55] The relegation of separate spheres references a huge body of literature on this concept, and the blurring of the realities of this concept as feminist historians began to study it in the 1960s-1970s. Separate spheres were never really separate, as females exerted power over both their own roles and the roles of men within the private or domestic sphere and the public sphere, in the cultivation of social norms. Examination of Martha Ballard's life in *A Midwife's Tale* supports the independence of Anglo American women during the early nineteenth century; Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1990).
[56] Ibid, 78.

collided with the ways in which Cherokees gendered their society, and the collision destroyed Cherokee credibility in the eyes of many Anglo-Americans, particularly those in power."[57]

Reexamining past economic or religious interactions between men and women throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries enables one to take into consideration the authority of women in facilitating intercultural relationships within an increasingly hybridized society. Briefly examining the role of women in the crafting of traditional objects of material culture, fostering familial connections and kinships, and serving prominent roles in making political decisions for their communities will further enable ethnohistorians to rewrite traditional narratives of American Indian history. Reexamining these relationships between Native peoples and their counterparts will also enable museum curators and exhibit designers to reassess their methods of artifact display and the content they choose to present to the general public.

[57] Ibid, 83.

CHAPTER TWO

Decolonizing North American Museums and Living History Sites in the Twenty-First Century

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Shepard Krech III and Barbara A. Hail's *Collecting Native America: 1870-1960* is a foundational work in the fields of ethnography, archaeology, and anthropology. Krech's introduction informs readers that "when George Heye decided in 1916 to found his own museum in New York to preserve everything pertaining to our American tribes, he, too, seemed motivated by educational goals: he said that he wished to provide an avenue for men like himself--businessmen interested in training in elementary anthropology."[58] Heye was passionate about archaeology and used his wealth to fund expeditions and future research. Krech elaborates on the foundational processes by which the Museum of the American Indian came to fruition, writing that, "Heye understood the importance of systematic collecting and recording and hired people to carry out these tasks professionally, although he never met his own standards. The Museum of the American Indian opened its exhibits to the public in 1922, and Heye's staff got on with the important business of research and scholarship."[59] Heye's obsession with acquiring American Indian artifacts culminated into "one of the world's great collections of material from Native American cultures, approximately one million objects, from exquisite Eskimo carved ivory to textiles from the Yamana people of Tierra del Fuego at the tip of South America."[60]

Regarded as something of an eccentric, Heye revealed very little of his personality or daily affairs. He did, however, maintain extensive collections records and business transactions

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[58] Shepard Krech III, "Introduction," in *Collecting Native America: 1870-1960*, eds. Shepard Krech III and Barbara A. Hail, (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999), 14.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Clara Sue Kidwell, "Every Last Dishcloth: The Prodigious Collecting of George Gustav Heye," in *Collecting Native America: 1870-1960*, eds. Shepard Krech III and Barbara A. Hail, (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999), 232.

upon acquiring artifacts. Prior to World War II, Heye travelled to and from Europe collecting artifacts from museums, archaeological sites, and dealers. During his era, it was not uncommon to see the human remains of indigenous peoples exhibited in a way that influenced its viewers to associate primitiveness with those societies. The trivial display of these remains, skulls in particular, was meant to support pseudoscientific evidence of human evolution. Historian and Native American author Clara Kidwell notes that the theories of Samuel G. Morton had already helped to establish the racial inferiority of Native Americans to Caucasians, explaining how comparing "the skulls of different racial populations [had] determined that Caucasians were superior because of their greater brain capacity. His work formed the basis of the science of phrenology, which was fostered in part by the collection of Indian skulls from battlegrounds on the Great Plains."[61] With exposure to ideas of The Columbian Exposition, Heye's fascination with Native Americans grew to an almost obsessive degree. Kidwell highlights that, "Heye was the product not only of American society seeking its own vision of the past but of a particular place, New York City...Heye was also shaped by a particular social environment in New York--the wealthy intellectual elite, many of German descent, who supported the arts and cultural institutions of the city."[62] Classist undertones associated with acquiring these artifacts resonated with Heye, as he, and other societal elites desired to create their own collections and learn from them.

Throughout the early and mid-twentieth century, fascination with Native American artifacts and culture began to gradually fade from academic and popular view. In light of this trend, Clara Kidwell expresses that, "Heye entered the collecting field at a crucial point, when interest in Indians as objects of curiosity had begun to decline. The nationalistic tendencies that

[61] Ibid, 234.
[62] Ibid, 235.

had inspired the great fairs and exhibitions of the 1800s were turning to imperialistic tendencies, with the Spanish-American War and the country's entry into the arena of world colonialism." She also mentions that, "public museums largely ceased collecting North American Indian materials during the early twentieth century," because of increased anthropological interest in South America.[63] By 1910, Heye had acquired around 30,000 objects and formed an agreement with the director of the university museum within the University of Pennsylvania, George B. Gordon, to house his collections. Heye also provided financial support to graduate students and curators of archaeology and ethnology, and held a prominent role within the museum's research committee.[64] The commodification of Native American artifacts from Connecticut, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas enabled Heye to abandon his previous connection with the University of Pennsylvania and pursue another with Columbia University. He then had his collections transferred to Philadelphia in 1912 for temporary exhibition.[65] Upon his mother's death in 1915, Heye was given full access to his family's fortune and fueled it into expansive collecting and housing of Native American artifacts found throughout the southeastern United States.[66]

Heye took up another mission with his collections, desiring to create his own museum dedicated to educating his acquaintances within the elite classes of American society. In the pursuit of this mission, Heye severed his former connection with Gordon by removing the original artifacts he donated to the University of Pennsylvania three years prior and replacing them with duplicates of lesser quality. Regardless of how beneficial their former relationship was for Heye, he abandoned his agreement with Gordon and established the Heye Foundation and the

[63] Ibid, 236.
[64] Ibid, 238.
[65] Ibid, 240.
[66] Ibid, 240-241.

Museum of the American Indian in 1916.[67] His collections were to be permanently housed in the Museum of the American Indian, under the authority of a board of trustees selected from his elite social circle. Funding of the museum and its staff was provided by Heye's board of trustees, with most of their financial support going to the hiring and training of archaeologists and ethnographers. Despite this progress, the Museum of the American Indian did not open to the public until six years later. Kidwell explains that, "the opening of the new museum was delayed by the nation's entry into World War I. The cornerstone was laid in November 1916, but the neighboring American Geographical Society occupied two floors of the new building to make maps for the navy, and the opening of the museum's displays to the public did not occur until 1922."[68]

With its opening, its founders hoped that the Museum of the American Indian would serve as an educational institution for both scientists and students of American anthropology.[69] What made this problematic, however, is that the audience which Heye had intended to study his collections were the business elite of New York, thus the notion of the Museum of the American Indian as a public museum seems redundant or false. To reach a broader scholarly audience, Heye knew that his museum needed to put forth publications. In 1918, "Heye hired Frederick Webb Hodge away from the Bureau of American Ethnology at the Smithsonian Institution. Hodge had edited the publications of the bureau and was a major figure in the scholarly community. As the foremost editor in the field of anthropology and ethnography in the country, he brought significant prestige to the Museum of the American Indian."[70] With research expeditions increasing in occurrence, Heye was able to create a diverse body of information for

[67] Ibid, 233-234.
[68] Ibid, 244.
[69] Ibid, 245-246.
[70] Ibid, 247.

publication through the findings of his field archaeologists. These scholarly publications spanned from North to South America during the mid-twentieth century, despite the waning prominence of the Smithsonian as a research institution in the early twentieth century.[71]

Kidwell further addresses Heye's meticulous management style of the Museum of the American Indian by writing that, "Heye was conscious of the public relations image of the museum with regard to the Indian people whose material culture he collected so passionately. In 1938 two members of the Hidatsa tribe requested the return of a tribal medicine bundle called the Water Buster that Heye had acquired in 1907."[72] Heye proposed instead that he would trade for another item of similar value, but failed to return the actual contents of the Water Buster to the Hidatsa tribe. Kidwell remarks that, "what Heye gave them [were] individual items that he said were contents of the bundle. Museum records reveal that they were indeed not from the Water Buster and that the actual bundle was not returned to the tribe until much later."[73]

Upon his death in 1956, Heye had accumulated a "collection of objects that represent both the highest artistic expressions of Indian cultures and the evidence of everyday life. Heye had what any museum director in contemporary America would want--a remarkable collection and the resources to promote its growth."[74] Regardless of the moral and ethical boundaries George Gustav Heye most likely crossed in order to build such a collection, his dedication to the

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[71] Denise Meringolo presents that although public history found an institutional home within the form of educational services within national parks and living history sites during the early twentieth century, administrators and practitioners directly involved in the interpretation of history have primarily possessed contradictory views of how history should be shared with the public, in *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks: Toward a New Genealogy of Public History*, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), 167. Within her conclusion, Meringolo responds to this ongoing debate in writing that, "such complexity and contradiction are not necessarily causes to despair, however. Thinking about public history as a government enterprise opens up new opportunities to think more broadly about its public value. In recent years the National Park Service has implemented new interpretive programs designed to broaden Americans' perception of the common past." She further asserts how, "in the federal government, history has developed not simply as an intellectual exercise but as a tool for the expansion of governmental authority and the management of both landscapes and people during the twentieth century."
[72] Ibid, 250.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.

collection of Native American artifacts and pursuit of anthropological knowledge enabled his institution to rise to success throughout the twentieth century, and it remains one of the leading Native American cultural museums within the nation in the present day.

On October 8, 1995, a collective of Canadian and American scholars, Native and non-Native, presented their research at the NMAI's George Gustav Heye Center in New York City for a symposium entitled "The Changing Presentation of the American Indian." Its purpose was to examine the ways in which Native Americans and their cultures have been represented in North American museums prior to the late twentieth century, and to expand upon these representations within a contemporary context.[75] Their research addressed the ongoing debate regarding the "curatorship of Native American exhibitions and the changing role of museums in presenting Indian cultural life."[76] This publication was intended to foster dialogue between museum professionals and both Native and non-Native communities in raising awareness of the ways in which indigenous cultures have been appropriated in museums and academic institutions throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

As museums increasingly respond to the communities they serve, they necessarily gain an awareness of the cultures that they represent. To successfully implement and exhibit inclusive and progressive narratives, collaboration on the part of museum curators and exhibit designers with indigenous peoples themselves is necessary. James D. Nason, director of the American Indian Studies Center at the University of Washington in Seattle, "acknowledges that it will often be difficult for museum professionals to surrender control, but argues that without Native

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[75] National Museum of the American Indian, *The Changing Presentation of the American Indian: Museums and Native Cultures*, (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 2000), 7. Proceedings from the 1995 symposium entitled "The Changing Presentation of the American Indian" are represented within this work, meant to address contemporary portrayals of American Indians and their cultures in North American museums.
[76] Ibid, 8.

collaboration the deepest and most complex meanings of Indian artifacts will be lost."[77] The relationship between Native Americans and the museum professionals who represent them should continually foster multicultural perspectives.

The authority of a museum or historic site in the education of a national history can hinder or benefit a visitor's learning experience based upon, of course, the ways in which their interactions with the content are influenced by their desire to connect with the history of another culture. Curators and visitors alike can be motivated to engage with a culture unfamiliar to their own through their initial stereotypical associations with that culture, but it can be a hazard for Native peoples looking to establish a working relationship with those curators because they may be otherwise discouraged by the manner with which the curators of that museum or historic site choose to exhibit their interpretations of indigenous cultures. In *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*, historian and Native scholar Amy Lonetree illustrates the prevalence of popular stereotypes associated with the portrayal of Native Americans in national museums, and contrasts these from the ways in which local communities interact with smaller tribal exhibits. Her argument centers around the notion that local museums have attempted to amend the damages they have done to native communities by misrepresenting the complexities of their cultures within their exhibits, and instead aim to emphasize the unique aspects of those cultures as independent historical narratives. Lonetree highlights the codependent relationship between public history and cultural history by expressing how, "it is now commonplace and expected that museum professionals will seek the input of contemporary communities when developing exhibitions focusing on American Indian content." She refers to this communication between native peoples and museum curators as "shared authority," by which those who possess ancestral ties to indigenous history hold a pivotal role in

[77] Ibid, 11.

determining how those stories are shared with the public.[78] Joycelyn Wedll's "Learn About Our Past to Understand Our Future: The Story of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe" complements Lonetree's examination of the successes of the Mille Lacs Ojibwe hybrid tribal heritage museum in Minnesota by providing her own insights as a Native woman aiding in its creation. Wedll, along with other members of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, collaborated closely with the Minnesota Historical Society during the late 1990s to plan and open to the public a museum dedicated to a contemporary and historical perspective of the Woodlands people. The development of the Mille Lacs Indian Museum is representative of social and cultural change on part of Native peoples, as the relationship between residents of the reservation and traders, specifically Harry and Jeanette Ayers, grew between 1919 and 1959.[79] Wedll explains how, "the Ayers operated a trading post for some forty years, working with the Mille Lacs Band and developing a close relationship with the people. During their years at Mille Lacs, the Ayers collected a vast amount of cultural material. In 1960, they donated the buildings, land, and materials they had collected at Mille Lacs to the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS)."[80] She further expresses that the museum is unique in its operation, because "it is a state historic site that also functions as a local history museum with active community participation. While the museum's administrative and financial support is provided by MHS, the history of the Mille Lacs Band is researched, interpreted, and brought to life by the people who now it best: Mille Lacs Band members."[81] As within the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC the Mille Lacs Indian Museum was initiated by the collecting and preserving of private

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[78] Amy Lonetree, "Introduction: Native Americans and Museums," in *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 19.
[79] Joycelyn Wedll, "Learn About Our Past to Understand Our Future: The Story of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe," in *The Changing Presentation of the American Indian: Museums and Native Cultures*, (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 2000), 89-90.
[80] Ibid, 90-91.
[81] Ibid, 91.

collections of material culture for commercial purposes. The wealth and diversity of these collections, however, did influence social change, as attitudes towards Native peoples and their involvement in academia and professional settings became more widely accepted throughout the nation. "Since its inception," Wedll writes, the Mille Lacs Indian Museum "has functioned as a meeting ground for a Native American community with a strong sense of its own heritage. This institution has drawn on the skills of local artisans who created many of the tools, utensils, toys, beadwork, and other items on exhibit."[82] Native Ojibwe are employed directly in various sectors of the museum, and continue to possess great authority in decision-making processes of the MHS. Joycelyn Wedll serves as site manager of the Mille Lacs Indian Museum.

The continuity of culture and tradition among the Mille Lacs Band is well illustrated through their efforts to express to the public aspects of their heritage through education, language, and spiritual practices. Within its exhibitions, a common sense of empathy is garnered through a shared larger history of Native resistance. The adaptations of the Ojibwe culture in response to European encroachment are the result of their ancestors' resistance to change as well as the pride that their successors take in maintaining their ancestors' practices. It is in this way that the Ojibwe define their community identity as well as their individual tribal identities.[83] Lonetree's analysis of the Mille Lacs Indian Museum is optimistic, as she praises the museum for its integration of Native perspectives and suggests that it has the potential to become an institution governed through self-determination. Implementing indigenous histories from Ojibwe natives has yielded a subjective construction of collective public memory, and so given these tribal members agency over their own ancestral history. Incentives to represent Native perspectives in content curation and consultation regarding artifacts use have not completely

[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid, 93-95.

overshadowed the narrative of colonization still present within most North American museums.[84] As progressive as the Mille Lacs Indian Museum is in its overall management style and mastery of community outreach, her finding is that the museum fails to define and address the impacts of colonization upon the adaptations and resilience of Ojibwe culture. The perspectives through which Ojibwe culture is portrayed within the Mille Lacs Indian Museum are not encompassing or varied enough in their interpretation of the breadth of this tribal history, even though they have transitioned away from object-based exhibitions and into concept-based exhibitions.[85] Lonetree emphasizes, however, that the Mille Lacs Indian Museum fails to incorporate and bring to the forefront survivance narratives which are integral to molding non-Native understandings of Ojibwe culture.

Lonetree's approach reflects a modern take on the management and production of educational content of tribal history museums, not unlike that of Laura Peers in *Playing Ourselves: Interpreting Native Histories at Historic Reconstruction*. Peers reveals both the successes and the shortcomings of historic sites within the Great Lakes area of the United States and Canada in interpreting indigenous histories, and reinforces these findings through her observations of interactions between visitors and interpreters. Her analysis of the ways in which the general public interacts with objects of material culture and costumed interpreters is one that suggests that the visitor's ability to engage with tangible objects primarily instills within them an open-mindedness that encourages them to decolonize their perceptions of North American museums and historic sites. Her findings emphasize the significance of living history sites as

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[84] Amy Lonetree, "Two: Collaboration Matters," in *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 44-45.
[85] Ibid, 46-47. Lonetree includes an interview with co-curator, Kate Roberts, who explained that the contemporary nature of the topics represented within most of the exhibits are conceptually-centered rather than object-centered. Although materials and objects were employed from the Ayer Collection, the content of many of the exhibits throughout the museum was not dictated by those objects, which made interpreting topics like Native sovereignty through the use of material culture and artifacts difficult for exhibit development teams involved.

mediums for inclusivity and change. Peers addresses this by asserting how, "the social history movement in academic and public history since the 1960s has brought a huge shift in emphasis from the lives and material details of upper-class people to those of working-class and ethnic backgrounds, as well as a new focus on women, and a corresponding shift from political history to the everyday lives of people engaged in it."[86] A concept that Peers continuously wrestles with throughout her account of these living history sites is the presumed responsibility of tribal peoples to conform to an idealized image of audience expectations, in both action and appearance, to evaluate the authenticity of historical interpretation occuring at each of these living history sites.

Elements of revisionist history permeate her inquiry, as she responds to the inhibiting means by which power dynamics have and continue to affect marginalized peoples and their limited presence within interpretations of the American narrative. What makes Peers' work particularly special is that she analyzes the impact that interpretation of historic sites has upon outsiders' cultural understandings of Native peoples, based solely upon exchanges and interactions between Native peoples and non-Native peoples. Her inclusion of an indigenous interpreter's experience, that of Ruth Christie, with a group of schoolchildren at Lower Fort Garry National Historic Site represents the immersive nature of a living history site, so much so that a child approaches the costumed interpreter and responds to her as if she were an authentic "injun." Peers establishes first that Ruth Christie "is a highly knowledgeable historian, well versed in nineteenth-century material culture and social relations, able to recite a Standard of Trade, and well aware of who married whom around Lower Fort Garry in the 1850s."[87] This

[86] Laura Peers, "Introduction," in *Playing Ourselves: Interpreting Native Histories at Historic Reconstruction,* (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2007), xiv-xv.
[87] Laura Peers, "Vignette: Ruth Christie, Lower Fort Garry National Historic Site," in *Playing Ourselves: Interpreting Native Histories at Historic Reconstruction,* (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2007), xi.

aside, Peers notes that at the time of her interaction with these schoolchildren she was "wearing replica clothing appropriate to one of the local northern Cree women who lived near the fort: moccasins, leggings, trade cloth dress, trade blanket coat, necklaces of trade beads."[88] The account of Christie's interaction with this child represents the struggle that Native peoples working within contemporary interpretation facilities face in attempting to broaden the historical narrative, and that these myths are rife with racist undertones that can still be perceived in the modern day, no matter how benign the associations with indigenous cultures.[89] That, Peers argues, is why interpreters operating in historic sites must hold themselves accountable for the impression that they make upon their visitors, and should be ever conscious of why their portrayal of this content is critical to decolonizing the American narrative and disbanding invalidated stereotypes of indigenous peoples.[90]

W. Richard West reflects views similar to those of both Lonetree and Peers in the representation of Native cultures within museum settings, both materially and personally. West advocates that with the implementation of repatriation standards, the American museum community is continually confronted with the notion that Native peoples are not of an extinct or forgotten culture, but remain very much within the present. He expresses how, "it is a powerful wake-up call for the American museum community, making it clear that contemporary Native peoples do not believe they are cultural relics of a dead or dying past. Rather, they are peoples and cultures of the present who draw upon ancient traditions and ways of being to survive in a

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[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Audience expectation and interaction with costumed native interpreters can also be examined through the interpretative practices of the late James Luna, a Payómkawichum, Ipi, and Mexican-American performance artist, photographer and multimedia installation artist in *Take a Picture with a Real Indian* (1991-1993). A brief summary of Luna's contributions to the field of museum interpretation are discussed in Rebecca Romani's "Remembering James Luna, Who Gave His Voice and His Body to Native American Art" (March 20, 2018), Hyperallergic Media, Inc., web, accessed November 1, 2019, https://hyperallergic.com/433437/james-luna-performance-artist-memorial/.

vastly changed cultural landscape."[91] West further explains that, "this sense of continuum extends to a belief in the links between Native peoples and collections of their material culture in a number of of the world's greatest museums. Under the U.S. law, the reality of that link can mean that museums must return some of their holdings to Native communities."[92] Regardless, West notes that it is the responsibility of these institutions to make these objects of material culture available to contemporary Native peoples who value them as an integral part of their identities. To inspire multicultural dialogue between museum staff, Native peoples, and the general public the illusion of these artifacts as objects of antiquity must be shattered, so that Native peoples will have a platform on which to relay their cultural beliefs to the general public. If this does not occur, then the assumption of indigenous groups as past civilizations will continue to be propagated within museum settings. West acknowledges how a major transition from history or cultural museums being regarded as a resource for societal elites to being regarded as resources for the general public, researchers, and even more radically, those groups that these museums represent within its exhibitions and collections occurred throughout the late twentieth-century:

> The intellectual and spiritual realities Native peoples bring to cultural material differ, often profoundly, from the ways others may see the very same objects. Museums must be willing to confirm and validate the distinctions in cultural perspectives and realities between the Native and Western worlds by using the native voice systematically on the exhibition floor, in [public] programming, and through new inclusive and collaborative approaches to scholarship.[93]

Since the end of the twentieth-century, there has been a societal shift in the way that the American public perceives of the roles of its local, state, and national museums. In earning a diverse standing as a history or cultural museum, it is the obligation of these institutions to

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[91] W. Richard West, "Appendices: Cultural Rethink," in *The Changing Presentation of the American Indian: Museums and Native Cultures*, (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 2000), 99.
[92] Ibid, 99.
[93] Ibid, 100.

establish a shared authority with indigenous peoples so that a more inclusive and representative historical narrative can flourish. West concludes, "if the museum community can make this cultural shift, museums have the chance to do even more than become centers for the exchange of cultural ideas. They will have the potential to assume a role that ascends to an entirely new plane--they will become far more pivotal to the continuing evolution of culture, and genuine instruments of the cultural reconciliation that society so desperately needs."[94] Not taking for granted the notion that museums are, for the most part, still regarded as scholarly institutions in the modern day by the majority of Americans, curatorial and exhibition staff have a viable platform for introducing and enabling fundamental social change. The inherent issue with museums at various levels is that those who are reluctant to abandon traditional narratives that only emphasize the victimization of indigenous peoples hinders their involvement in creating a more inclusive and realistic social history.

In his essay, "Presenting the American Indian: From Europe to America," Evan M. Maurer concludes that the traditional exhibiting of Native American narratives in North American museums correlates directly with Americans' mimicry of European models of representation. These methods of display are still routinely utilized, but Maurer argues that "what *has* changed, and is still in an ongoing process of reevaluation and redirection, is the attitude of museum professionals, who have developed a growing sense of responsibility and respect for American Indian communities, and the involvement of these communities in the process of their own cultural representation."[95] Assimilation narratives associated with a reliance upon documentation solely from an European perspective are fading from the museum realm, but only gradually. Collaboration on behalf of curatorial staff with indigenous peoples is, at least, growing

[94] Ibid, 102.
[95] Evan M. Maurer, "Presenting the American Indian: From Europe to America," in *The Changing Presentation of the American Indian: Museums and Native Cultures*, (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 2000), 15.

in frequency. As a result of these changing attitudes, "a growing number of Native Americans holding professional appointments in museums or serving as consultants and advisors to institutions involved in the presentation of American Indian art and culture."[96] This not only reflects a positive instance of creating shared authority in the portrayal of tribal histories, but also that of the ways by which museum curators become more effective in reaching a variety of cultural audiences.

Maurer further explains how the prioritization of American Indian material culture within European museums were regarded and displayed as oddities. He expresses that, "the earliest 'museum' presentations of American Indian objects in Europe were the popular collections of natural and man-made items called 'cabinets of curiosities.' These were usually private collections assembled by rich merchants or noblemen with an interest in natural history and a world that was rapidly expanding."[97] The global influence of countries like England, France, Germany, and Holland during the nineteenth-century enabled economic and industrial advancement. In 1851, a world fair was organized in London. An iron-and-glass exhibition hall was erected to house thousands of exhibits from across the world. Among the collections on display within this exhibition hall was one regarding Native peoples from Canada and its surrounding regions. In interpreting the guidebook content associated with this exhibit, Maurer emphasizes that a selection of objects was described "as being made by 'Canadian savages' and noted their contrast with products of English civilization. These persistent colonial attitudes influenced the presentation of Native Americans and their cultures, showing them to be of less value than their European counterparts."[98]

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[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid, 19.
[98] Ibid, 21.

While this devaluation of indigenous material culture and artifacts is not surprising in the least, Maurer's findings reflect that the representation of Native Americans and their cultures within North American museums have been falsely tailored to impress upon the general public misinformed notions of indigenous peoples' contributions to both European and American history since the eighteenth-century. Additionally, Maurer addresses how many of the world's most significant Native American collections came about as a result of objects being transferred from exhibition fairs to ethnographic museums, writing that, "there is a direct link between the European tradition of world's fairs displaying people and objects from Native American cultures and the establishment of the first museums presenting American Indian culture to the non-Indian public." Furthermore, he notes that, "for the most part, the international fairs and expositions, as well as the great nineteenth-century museums of anthropology, viewed Native American objects as cultural artifacts without any particular aesthetic value or spiritual significance for the Native American peoples who made and used them."[99] Thus, the failure to accurately interpret and depict both the spiritual and effectual purposes of American Indian artifacts resulted in the production of false narratives that depicted tribal beings within a static and archaic landscape.

A progressive institution which Maurer applauds is New York's Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) for their respectful usage of American Indian material culture within their exhibitions. Since 1941, MoMA has approproached its American Indian material culture as an interpretation of art on the same scale as that of Euro-American material culture. He explains how, "the clean lines of the displays in these elegant, white rooms presented American Indian art in a straightforward and respectful manner that emphasized the aesthetic qualities of the objects."[100] Even within such an environment, Maurer acknowledges that this was not progressive enough

[99] Ibid, 23.
[100] Ibid, 25.

for the sake of emboldening the presence of indigenous peoples' in professional museum settings. Progressive exhibitions within the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of Natural History have increased in number since the late 1990s, and "force us to evaluate Native American art and culture on their own terms."[101] Direct involvement with Native peoples has enabled these museums to foster a much clearer representation of how American Indian objects were used and what they represent culturally. Addressing the cultural imperatives of both Native Americans and Euro-Americans through a reexamination of material culture will precipitate social change through reconciliations of seemingly disparate narratives.

The gendering of Native American objects in museum settings is addressed within James D. Nason's inspection of a "pounder" in "'Our' Indians: The Unidimensional Indian in the Disembodied Past."[102] He explains that, "a pounder was not, in fact, just a piece of coral stone fashioned into a utilitarian tool for everyday use: it reflected the pride and skill of the maker; the role of men as the creators and providers of such tools for women; the distinctive roles of both men and women as creators of food," and the ways by which these ancient objects were effective in their purpose within their society.[103] The primary issue with this is that viewers of this form of material culture within exhibitions are often unfamiliar with the roles displayed artifacts played within Native societies, as well as why they are objects significant to the defining of their cultures. Nason expresses that, "virtually all museum exhibitions on Native Americans face the same problem: how to realistically enable visitors to comprehend more of the fabric of social and historical meanings that encase objects, that *are* objects."[104]

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[101] Ibid, 26.
[102] James D. Nason, "Our" Indians: The Unidimensional Indian in the Disembodied Local Past," in *The Changing Presentation of the American Indian: Museums and Native Cultures*, (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 2000), 31.
[103] Ibid, 31.
[104] Ibid.

The responsibility that national, state, and local museums hold in informatively and properly displaying these objects is not enacted in an equal manner, unfortunately. Nason finds that most commonly museum visitors are influenced by inaccurate or falsely stereotypical exhibitions found in local museums or historic sites, rather than gaining more scholarly and informative influence from larger state or national institutions.[105] His examination of four types of exhibitions found within local museum settings addresses the reasons why many of these smaller-scale institutions are either misinformed or reluctant to change. The first is the "geographical or ethnographical" exhibition, in which materials are displayed from a given region or cultural group to foster a sense of tourism among its viewers. The second is the "developmental" exhibition which enables the viewer to interpret cultural advancement through a concentration on objects which indicate evolution through technology, for example. The third is the "life-group" display, which illustrates cultural values and norms through the creation of a habitat from the time period, this is most commonly observed in natural history museums. The fourth type of exhibition is "display" or "open storage," in which the museum displays objects regardless of their provenance. Within these comparisons, Nason suggests that local museums are prone to create open storage exhibitions without much provenance associated with the objects employed, thus confusing or misinforming their viewers of significant aspects of Native American cultures.[106]

The renderings of Native cultures which local history museums often pose to the public place Native peoples within the past, and negate placing them also within a contemporary context reflective of issues that face Native peoples within the present.[107] Nason points out that

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[105] Ibid, 35.
[106] Ibid, 36-37.
[107] Venida S. Chenault presents a similar argument responding to contemporary social issues which affect indigenous communities, specifically regarding social awareness of women within those communities that face

"this disassociation between the community's past and present essentially 'disembodies' the reality of a continuing Indian presence by the simple expedient of denying it. Even the exhibition of historic photographs of Native Americans serves to reinforce this deadly notion, as these photographs present a fading glimpse of bygone days, and thus of long-gone people."[108] Furthermore, Nason mentions that local museum settings so too neglect to identify the makers of the objects they display. As historians, he concludes that "our greatest concern should be the exhibitions' misrepresentations of the past to the disservice of the present."[109] These exhibitions often mirror the values of a community; therefore, a greater consciousness of the ways by which these museums impact the cultural understandings of its viewers is necessary.[110] Collaboration with Native peoples themselves is essential to reversing and eliminating the further presentation of negative stereotypes to the general public.

Richard W. Hill's "The Indian in the Cabinet of Curiosity" supports Nason's perspective on the inclusivity of Native peoples in the curation of North American museums by establishing that there has been and will continue to be ongoing changes which highlight the growing influence of Native peoples in the telling of their own histories. Hill explains how, "museum curators, many of whom were academically trained anthropologists, looked at Indians as cultural informants. Indians provided information that was to be analyzed and verified by non-Indian scholars to support or refute diverse theories about Indian origins, beliefs, and patterns of

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domestic abuse, in *Weaving Strength, Weaving Power: Violence and Abuse against Indigenous Women*, (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2011).

[108] James D. Nason, "Our" Indians: The Unidimensional Indian in the Disembodied Local Past," in *The Changing Presentation of the American Indian: Museums and Native Cultures*, (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 2000), 37.

[109] Ibid, 39.

[110] "Hearts of Our People," curated by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, is the country's first exhibition devoted solely to the works of Native American women. This inclusive interpretation of women's work enables non-Native visitors to Nashville's Frist Art Museum to gain greater cultural understandings of the prominence of Native women within their societies as makers and providers of material culture. Media coverage of this exhibition was presented through PBS; Jeffrey Brown, "A groundbreaking exhibition finally tells the stories of Native women artists," (October 18, 2019), UNC TV: Public Media North Carolina, web, accessed November 7, 2019, https://www.pbs.org/video/hearts-of-our-people-1571441732/.

culture."[111] Although strong collaborative relationships between Native Americans and museums have become more common in the modern day, the notion of who actually portrays their tribal histories to the public is still less certain. Hill notes that, "museums now look at Indians as constituents, not as exporters of material goods for study...Indians serve as museum staff members or paid consultants on exhibition development teams. There remains a lack of Native curators in major institutions, but Native communities often have more direct to what gets shown, what gets said, and what happens in the museum."[112]

The tendency of museums to rely upon the exhibition of dioramas and life-size figurines within an ancient historical context causes their viewers to be only partially informed of the adaptation of indigenous cultures over time. The perception of Native communities as past civilizations further pushes the opportunity to foster effective communication between Native peoples and the general public in the modern day into the background, and only serves to imprint within the American public's mind the notion that Native societies do not fit within their pre-existing conceptions of their own history. Thus, it is the duty of public historians to act as a translator between both cultural realms to put forth a more accurate and representative social history that includes all of its contributors and their roles in helping to shape and influence that history.

[111] Richard W. Hill, Sr., "The Indian in the Cabinet of Curiosity," in *The Changing Presentation of the American Indian: Museums and Native Cultures,* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 2000), 103.
[112] Ibid, 104.

CHAPTER THREE

Museum of the Cherokee Indian, Cherokee, North Carolina

To observe real life application of these critiques and strategies for museum curation and collections management, I will recount my experiences from visiting the Museum of the Cherokee Indian on October 12, 2018. Considerable attention to sensory details has enabled the Museum of the Cherokee Indian to achieve an aesthetically pleasing environment for learning to occur. Rather than sharp angles, exhibits throughout the museum have a rounded design, so that each transition of content or time leads the visitor comfortably into the next area of content. Artifacts are placed in alcoves within cases, as well as distributed throughout the somewhat open areas between panels, so that no amount of space is wasted. Placement of artificial flora creates an outdoor atmosphere within most spaces and entryways. These areas are carefully dressed, so that the visitor becomes increasingly immersed within the narrative. Certain rooms within the museum are even temperature controlled to match the tone of the content of a particular panel or area as the visitor transitions throughout the museum. Open-ended questions are printed on panels throughout many of the exhibits, in order to encourage museum visitors to engage in free thought and expression as they learn about and rationalize the history and customs of Cherokee culture.

Upon reviewing multiple publications addressing the contentious subject matter of portraying indigenous histories within a museum setting and how to approach them with educational intent, I was inspired to examine and evaluate learning strategies implemented by the

museum's curatorial staff.[113] My observations of learning experiences that occurred during my visit to the Museum of the Cherokee Indian were positive, as both adolescent and adult learners were equally interacting with material culture and technology. The museum learning experience exhibited within the Museum of the Cherokee Indian is representative of modern perspectives of indigenous histories and a willingness to learn more beyond the parameters of a standardized classroom setting.

Needing to delve more deeply into Cherokee culture to better understand the ways in which women were so integral to the daily operations of this society in both the past and the present, I returned to Cherokee to conduct an interview with an Eastern Band native who has the unique position of serving as a liaison for college students and outsiders seeking to make greater connections between past and present Cherokee society. On June 21, 2019, I interviewed Mrs. Sky Sampson, Director of the Cherokee Center and Community Outreach Liaison for the Qualla Boundary and surrounding communities.[114] My questions within the next paragraphs were posed to respondent, Mrs. Sampson. I both recount within this exchange her dialogue verbatim, as well as paraphrase some of her responses, as I was also being led on a walking tour of the museum throughout the course of the interview.

I asked Sampson, as a native woman, what it your perception of the ways in which your culture is represented within academia versus within popular history? Sampson explained how contemporary academic scholarship is more positive in its interpretation of native cultures, but still reflects a hesitancy to explore cultural pathways. "From what I've experienced," she expressed, "the context of Native Americans hardly exists in academic textbooks and

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[113] Beverly Serrell examines techniques regarding museum education and exhibit labels and how to propose open ended questions to visitors in view of traditional diorama exhibitions in *Exhibit Labels: An Interpretive Approach*, 2nd ed., (Walnut Creek, CA: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 55-57.
[114] See Figure 1 in Appendix A, 116.

classrooms. I attended a public school and had one page of Native history that covered the Trail of Tears, which is hardly enough to cover just that piece, let alone our entire tribal history and culture. Women are not seen in that part of our history as well, but our women are our life givers and all things were created around them inside of our culture." In particular, she noted that bilingual language usage by Cherokee children rapidly decreased in the early twentieth century, explaining that "the Cherokee syllabary was discouraged from use by native students that attended English speaking schools, so much so that spoken language was nearly forgotten as recently as two generations removed from the present day." Mrs. Sampson shared that her grandmother was one of the students who were discouraged from speaking the Cherokee language while attending federal school, but that she, in adulthood, joined an initiative to reestablish the teaching and utilization of the spoken Cherokee language so that it would not be forgotten.

She further asserted that, "throughout history our tribe had no rights to vote or own property which during that time period meant we meant nothing. Europeans seen that we valued our women and could not understand our concept let alone accept our men. The museum depicts accurate moments within our history but our women go unseen due to the current political state at those times." The creation of a written language and a tribal government aided the Cherokee in establishing themselves as an independent nation. Cherokee culture is represented with a degree of sophistication perhaps higher than that of other tribes within the southeastern United States, as the Cherokee are often placed within a grouping of what is referred to as the Five Civilized Tribes.

As Director of the Cherokee Center and correspondent for the Museum of the Cherokee Indian, Mrs. Sampson recalled that she often is posed many questions which reflect a deeply

rooted bias on the part of non-Native visitors. While aiding in tours throughout the museum, she is often asked such stereotypical questions as, "where are the teepees?," or "where are your costumes?" The aspect of this that she seemed to find ironic is that with as much scholarly information as there is regarding native cultures in the present day, non-Native visitors are still asking many of the same questions that have been asked for decades. Her response to this was witty and sarcastic, as she noted that Cherokee people live like most of their neighboring white residents: "we have internet access and watch Netflix like everyone else." She mentioned that although Cherokee people still take part in traditional practices and ceremonies, their daily lives play out much like non-Native residents within nearby communities.

I asked Mrs. Sampson about how native women are represented within the Museum of the Cherokee Indian, and of which aspects exhibit to both native or non-native audiences their degree of agency within Cherokee society. She responded that "women have always possessed a powerful role within Cherokee society, as they have been the backbone of decision making for their male counterparts. Women have been and continue to be revered as providers of food, pottery, clothing, blankets, jewelry, and the primary caregivers for their children." Sampson noted that traditional practices such as basket weaving and pottery making reflect a degree of skill and individuality that impress upon non-Native visitors the significance of women in the maintenance of daily life.

As Mrs. Sampson led me throughout the Museum of the Cherokee Indian, she began by addressing the popular misconception that Cherokee people in the present day worship animals and participate in ceremonies which deify them as idols. Sampson remarked, "we do not worship animals as if they are gods, but recognize them within our Creation Story." She impressed upon me that traditional stories which feature animal characters are used in order to teach children

moralistic lessons or cultural practices. Along the entryway into the exhibit spaces, Sampson explained to me the significance of the stories featured along the wall. She particularly highlights the story of Spearfinger, a traditional narrative about a monstrous woman named Utlvda who would stab people and steal their livers.[115] Traditional narratives such as this were employed by mothers teaching their children about the dangers of wandering away from their families at a young age, as they could be harmed or kidnapped. Spearfinger is a preventative and cautionary tale, meant to reinforce the protection of families through togetherness. Sampson emphasized the high degree of creativity involved in the telling of these moralistic stories to Cherokee children.

She later pointed out to me the most recent exhibit that has been installed within a gallery space near the exit, entitled *All My Relations*. The installment includes a variety of photographs taken by Eastern Band artist, Shan Goshorn, of Cherokee women either weaving baskets or crafting pottery in traditional ways.[116] Each of the images is a black and white photograph, making them appear as if they were taken in the nineteenth-century. Yet what surprised me most is that Mrs. Sampson informed me that each of them is a photograph taken in the present day of local women practicing their craft on the Qualla Boundary. This approach, she noted, is "problematic for non-Native visitors who have no prior knowledge of Cherokee traditions, as this further encourages them to associate these practices with a past culture." She references time period photographs within the Hunter Library Special Collections Archives in Cullowhee, North Carolina, expressing that "the stylistic choice to mirror these images plays on the expectations of non-Native audiences and what they desire to see within the museum."[117] It is in this way that

[115] See Figure 2 in Appendix A, 117.
[116] Museum of the Cherokee Indian, "Traveling Exhibits," Exhibits, web, accessed November 6, 2019, https://www.cherokeemuseum.org/archives/traveling_exhibits/all-my-relations.
[117] See Figure 3 in Appendix A, 118, *Oconaluftee Indian Village: Alice Walkingstick*, n.d. Courtesy Hunter Library Special Collections, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, NC. Portraits such as this comprise an exhibit of Cherokee women's work throughout the gallery space of the Museum of the Cherokee Indian, however, in a modern rendering of their predecessors. Material culture frames the remainder of the gallery space, as pieces created by the

non-Native audiences develop their understanding of traditional native practices through their associations of gender with objects of material culture. Goshorn's stylistic choice to portray contemporary Cherokee women within black and white photographs mimicks nineteenth century anthropological-type depictions of Native individuals, such as those taken by American ethnologist, Edward Sheriff Curtis.[118]

Overall, Mrs. Sampson agrees that there could be an even more in depth cross-examination of the ways in which gender roles in the Cherokee community have remained stable for hundreds of years. In shaping and crafting familial structures, women primarily determined how tribal kinships grew and developed over time. The formation of a community rested upon the strength and authority of women, specifically through the organizational structure of clans. Women held a prominent role in initiating stickball ceremonies within their societies and preparing men to participate in the playing of stickball, as if preparing them for warfare. Stickball ceremonies were and are a means to reconcile and resolve intertribal conflicts and disputes.

Another question I asked addressed sources that were consulted in the curation of exhibits and content. Mrs. Sampson answered that for the development of the exhibits, a strong emphasis is placed on the usage of primary documentation to provide visitors with historical context of the ways in which Cherokee culture has resisted undesirable core changes imposed upon them by non-Native outsiders since their removal from the Appalachian Mountains in the late-1830s. Curatorial use of the Hunter Library Special Collections at Western Carolina University provides some of the archival materials needed for establishing historical context of an area of content, such as the Baker Roll of 1928, a base document which alphabetically lists

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artisans featured within the photographs are distributed throughout the exhibit. These pieces include woven baskets and pottery.

[118] Edward S. Curtis Gallery, "Home," web, accessed November 6, 2019, https://edwardscurtis.com/.

the names of Eastern Band of Cherokee from generations prior. Collecting oral histories also plays a large role in the creation of the gallery space, as local native artisans, potters, and craftsmen are consulted for the use of their materials.

Next, I asked, do you think that museums struggle to represent native cultures as they exist in the present day? Do you get the impression that native societies in general are still represented in antiquity? A phrase that Mrs. Sampson uses in regards to the impact of tourism on the curation of content at the Museum of the Cherokee Indian is "we are a people of the past, but we are not a people that remain in the past." She explained to me that the Museum of the Cherokee Indian has made great strides to become a modern and accessible exhibit space. The educational content that local Cherokee tribal residents, curatorial staff, and students of Western Carolina University have developed is that of a historical contextualization of a culture that has been faced with change, but has adapted to those changes over time. Sampson remarks for those who regard the Cherokee as a past people, "we are still here." She also mentioned that she has "seen many museums that present natives in a past context and fail to speak of us in a present day form. Our museum in particular is a timeline through our history and is made to complement our outdoor living and active museum at the Oconaluftee Indian village." The Museum of the Cherokee Indian has gone to great lengths to offer non-Native visitors historical perspectives on who the Cherokee have been and are within the present day. Yet there are still some shortcomings in how some of the museum's content is exhibited. Referring again to the exhibit space filled with black and white photographs of women performing their traditional roles in the present day, she acknowledges that this can actually hinder non-Native visitors from connecting these aspects of Cherokee culture with the present day. The stylistic choice used in the printing and exhibiting of black and white photographs in *All My Relations* is reminiscent of that of

framing methods employed by predominantly nontribal museums of the past to portray a culture in antiquity. Attention to tourism most likely influenced both artist and curatorial choices in presenting these contemporary photographs in a period piece manner.

Many of the exhibits throughout the Museum of the Cherokee Indian reflect aspects of culture that most non-Native visitors will only passively acknowledge, such as the significance of the stickball ceremony or the crafting of utilitarian objects such as baskets and pottery. The influence of women in political, religious, and educational arenas is present at the museum, but not to an untrained eye. Yet the impact of Eastern Band Cherokee women upon their clans and kinships is unmistakable, as their traditions and their influence continue to present themselves within modern retellings of the ways by which the Cherokee resisted core cultural changes during the mid-nineteenth century. Non-Native visitors must first approach this cultural museum with a willingness to learn about cultural norms and practices which differ from those of Western societies in order to truly appreciate it the exhibition content displayed throughout the Museum of the Cherokee Indian and understand the uniqueness of Cherokee culture in its opposition to Western societal practices.

CHAPTER FOUR

Museum of the Southeast American Indian, Pembroke, North Carolina

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To learn about the ways in which women influenced the shaping of tribal cultures within Eastern North Carolina, I contacted the curatorial staff of the Museum of the Southeast American Indian to aid me in understanding how integral women were and are in the formation of Lumbee culture. On July 12, 2019, I interviewed Mrs. Alisha Locklear Monroe, Lumbee native and Museum Assistant and Educational Coordinator at the Museum of the Southeast American Indian.[119] I both recount within this exchange their dialogue verbatim, as well as paraphrase some of their responses, as I was also being led on a walking tour of the museum throughout the course of much of the interview. My questions within the next paragraphs were posed to respondents, Mrs. Monroe and Mrs. Fields.

I asked Mrs. Monroe, as a native woman, what is your perception of the ways in which your culture is represented within academia versus within narratives of popular history? Monroe responded, "academic scholarship is still narrow minded in the ways that it chooses to present itself." There is much potential yet to be explored within native history, but scholars seem to be disconnected from native peoples themselves and fail to consult them often enough. She further expressed that, "some native scholars have grown too comfortable with maintaining certain relationships within a small group of native artists, scholars, poets, etc. and fail to think beyond the circuit of individuals that are familiar to them." Larger conversations need to be inspired and shared.

I then asked quite generally how native women are represented within the Museum of the Southeast American Indian, and of which aspects exhibit to both native or non-native audiences

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[119] See Figure 4, Appendix A, 119.

their degree of agency within Lumbee society. Monroe explained that, in general, a woman's voice has always been stifled within a western perspective; "Lumbee society is matrilineal and embraces emotion openly, women have always played a central role in decision-making for the betterment of all within that society." The curatorial staff of the Museum of the Southeast American Indian adopts a progressive view in how they hope to represent the accomplishments of women within Lumbee society. The primary question Mrs. Monroe asks when incorporating new subject matter into exhibitions or educational programming is "where are the women?" By this, she aims to bring into the light lesser heard narratives of the individual power and authority enacted by native women in the past to more fully contextualize narratives of those native women enacting power and authority within their societies in the present day.

Additionally, I was able to interview Mrs. Nancy Strickland Fields, Lumbee native and Director and Curator of the Museum of the Southeast American Indian.[120] My questions within the next paragraph were posed specifically to Mrs. Fields. I asked her to share, very broadly, how the museum engages in content planning based upon the needs of their community and their visitors. Consulting Mrs. Fields, I found out more about the typical audience that attends the Museum of the Southeast American Indian. Describing it as a "4 Core Audience," Mrs. Fields explained that the typical visitor demographic of the museum consists of tourists, local residents, K-12 students, and University of North Carolina Pembroke university students. Tourists typically visit from late March until October, are non-native individuals, and are vocal in their interactions with museum staff. In particular, Mrs. Fields noted that non-native tourists are the most willing to share their prior knowledge with museum staff and have a fulfillment to themselves to share that prior knowledge with them.

[120] See Figure 5, Appendix A, 120.

As I was led throughout the exhibitions by Mrs. Monroe, she expressed the ways by which the influence of women is reflected within the material culture showcased throughout the entire museum. One of the most significant exhibits within the museum focuses on the roles that Lumbee women served during the Civil War. In particular, Monroe emphasized the making of a large quilted blanket by Maggie Lowrie Locklear that represents the cultural resilience of women in the southeastern backcountry during wartime.[121] Violence and destruction on the homefront did not hinder the traditional practices of women in the making of material culture, and this quilted blanket serves as a reminder of the resilience of a community facing societal upheaval and threat. Additionally, a glass display case within the same exhibit space houses a small collection of garments and accessories owned by Maggie Lowrie Locklear which serve to emphasize her significance as a prominent female figure of Lumbee society. Typically, Monroe expressed that the museum begins with a concept for which they want to curate content and then "contact tribal centers for objects to contextualize those concepts. In this way, the provenance of these items comes directly from Native individuals and does not cause a hindrance in obtaining them" from mainstream institutions.

In aiming to present contemporary experiences of Lumbee society, Mrs. Fields provided me with a brief overview of the processes that the museum must consider in creating its curatorial content. Fields asserted that in order to "dispel stereotypes of Lumbee culture within a larger framework, we need to keep storytelling alive." Through genealogy, museum staff aim to foster "organic conversations" within their local community. Budgets and operational expenses may, at times, limit the scope of material that the museum is able to exhibit, but Fields noted that

[121] In an online news report from the *Richmond County Daily Journal*, the historical significance of Maggie Lowrie Locklear in the interpretation of Lumbee society is integral, as she is regarded as a civil rights activist. Locklear was estimated to have completed the quilt in 1910. Richmond County Daily Journal, "Quilt Sewn by Lowrie's Daughter Donated to UNCP Museum," (January 5, 2018), Daily Journal, web, accessed November 13, 2019, https://www.yourdailyjournal.com/features/78114/quilt-sewn-by-lowries-daughter-donated-to-uncp-museum.

the "preservation of material culture establishes a strong platform for representing the relatability and the authenticity" of the Lumbee Nation.

CHAPTER FIVE

The National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, DC

To better understand the manner in which the National Museum of the American Indian displays its collections and curates its content for a variety of audiences, I inquired the expertise of Dr. David W. Penney, Associate Director of Museum Scholarship, Exhibitions, and Public Engagement at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC.[122] I both recount within this exchange his dialogue verbatim, as well as paraphrase some of his responses, as he was describing detailed aspects of exhibition content throughout much of the interview, of which I have chosen to keep generalized for the understanding of multiple audiences. My questions within the next paragraphs were posed to respondent, Dr. Penney.

I began the interview by asking Penney what his perception is of the ways in which indigenous cultures are represented within academia versus within popular history. Penney addressed the setting of the academic landscape, noting that Native American histories "have been represented under a cluster of disciplines." Penney commented that the best institution in representing and involving indigenous peoples in the telling of their histories is the University of Minnesota, as they have many departments devoted to interpreting oral histories, material culture, artwork, and social movements regarding contemporary native issues. In particular, Penney expressed that the field of "Indigenous Studies is represented through the art history department at the University of New Mexico." Of the academic landscape that Indigenous Studies and Native American history find themselves in, Penney emphasized that the "largest of those disciplines is anthropology, which defined itself in the nineteenth century. Archaeology,

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[122] See Figure 6, Appendix A, 121.

cross disciplinary cultural studies, women's studies, and native studies then came about from anthropology through archaeology."

Penney reinforced for me that popular historical historical interpretations of native cultures are still misinformed, expressing how, "curriculum in grade school represents little of native cultures. Their cultures are presented from a standpoint of what did they eat, and where do they live? Curriculum is designed around teaching those same aspects to different aged audiences," instead of more concrete experiences of native peoples in their present contexts. He also noted that popular media is equally uninformed, asserting that it is "important for us [curatorial staff and scholars] to acknowledge what they don't know in order to craft a more meaningful experience in the museum. It is not an issue of learning, but rather an issue of unlearning" what they have learned that misinformed them.

I then asked Dr. Penney to comment on how native women are represented within the National Museum of the American Indian, and of which aspects exhibit to both native or non-native audiences their degree of agency within tribal societies. Penney informed me that there are four large galleries and one small, and a permanent installation at the NMAI; he then listed the names of each exhibition and provided a brief overview of their content. The first mentioned was *Our Universes: Traditional Knowledge Shapes Our World*, the last of three inaugural installations that were featured at the opening of the museum in 2004. Centered around cosmology and worldview, Penney explained that the focus of this exhibition was to represent different native communities in the western hemisphere. He noted that tribal communities were consulted in its curation, and that "most of those involved were men, but that there were some women involved in its curation." As a result, he acknowledged that *Our Universes* is "more male dominated in information, as the default consultants have been male and women consultants

were less visible at that time." The second exhibition that he discussed was co-curated by Susane Hearshill, a founder of the museum, entitled *Nation to Nation: Treaties Between the United States and American Indian Nations*. This exhibition, Penney explained, examines "treaty relationships between Indian nations and the United States, in the context that these relationships established foundations of contemporary native policies."

The third exhibition that Penney mentioned was entitled *Americans*. He noted that the focus of this exhibition revolves around the presence of "American Indians in popular culture with the insight that images of Indians and stories relate to larger issues in American history." He further emphasized that the content of the exhibition addresses how "Indian imagery is used in popular culture, from the name of a street to a character in film or television, and other forms of branding." Lastly, in the exhibition, *The Great Inka Road: Engineering an Empire*, Penney noted that there is "not a focus on women in particular, but they are incorporated throughout each of these stories," because of their natural influence within their cultures.

When asked about tribal representation within the National Museum of the American Indian, Penney informed me that there are "more than 1,200 indigenous cultures throughout the Americas," and that their extensive collection of artifacts and artwork represent a multitude of these tribal identities. He explained to me that the curation of exhibits and content was done in a manner that consulted various tribal communities, and that an attention to oral histories and conceptual representation was considered throughout most of the exhibitions.

Next, I asked Penney his opinion regarding whether or not museums struggle to represent native cultures as they exist in the present day. He responded, "that shift has taken place over the past two or three decades...in the 70s and 80s, you were talking about things of the past with material culture. Historical context was done so through art by appropriation, in which artful

looking things were taken from an artifacts collection to represent tribal cultures." Penney also emphasized that the modern context of exhibitions devoted to indigenous art and material culture have been "boosted by a sense of spiritualism and multiculturalism," with the increased involvement of indigenous peoples in the curation of modern exhibitions. I then asked Penney, do you get the impression that native societies in general are still represented in antiquity? He explained that there has "been an obvious recognition of the problem that natural history museums used to display indigenous peoples and dinosaurs together." Much more emphasis is placed on contemporary culture in the form of displaying native artwork. Native survivance and persistence in the present reflect conventional views of most North American museums. Penney noted that these "juxtapositions of the old and new are treated officially as continuity and tradition, but without recognition of native communities engaging with modernity. This cultural reaction is presented through the focus of an increasingly global and industrialized progressive world." Penney further noted that while "indigenous peoples have been positioned as a primitive culture of the past, the aim [of the NMAI] is to connect the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in regard to how native communities engage with material culture and survivance narratives in the present."

When asked what typical audience demographics comprise visitors to the NMAI, Penney informed me that the curatorial staff aim to cater to a general audience. In determining target audiences, Penney replied that, "when we do demographic studies of our visitors, most are tourists and non local, particularly from New York, which include visitors from overseas." Overall, he expressed that visitors to the NMAI are "a better educated audience, because a lot of people have expectations of a traditional American Indian museum and are motivated by wanting to learn about American Indians in a contemporary context." He noted that while there is an

audience expectation of interacting with historic materials, "visitors are offered more stories than perhaps they would have expected."

In his article, "From Third Person to First: A Call for Reciprocity Among Non-Native and Native Museums," Karl A. Hoerig comments on the significance of the National Museum of the American Indian in influencing consensus interpretations of indigenous cultures:

> It has drawn vital attention to native people, and helped to affirm the primacy of native people's voices and perspectives in the interpretation of their own lives and histories. Furthermore, through the NMAI, the Smithsonian Institution has provided valuable training and other services to the use of objects for loan to tribal museums from the museum's collections. At the same time, however, native people with whom I have visited the museum or to whom I have spoken after their visit have frequently expressed disappointment with the museum. This disappointment is voiced as some variation on, "They did not have anything on exhibit from *our* community."[123]

The National Museum of the American Indian is successful in providing non-Native visitors with a broad introduction to a variety of indigenous cultures, but fails to represent tribal histories in a manner that truly reflects indigenous cultures in their entirety and complexity. Hoerig elaborates upon how the scope and breadth of exhibition content featured throughout the NMAI attracts a rather diverse audience, but does not represent the values of individual native communities for native visitors themselves.[124] The effect, then, is that native communities that visit the NMAI are often unable to identify with or feel represented within the institution as a whole, because the content is directed towards a general non-Native audience.

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[123] Karl A. Hoerig, "From Third Person to First: A Call for Reciprocity Among Non-Native and Native Museums," *Museum Anthropology* 33 (2010): 66.
[124] Ibid.

CHAPTER SIX

The Influence of National Parks in Shaping American Identity

Many of the ideals associated with North American perceptions of nature and wilderness formed in the early twentieth century with the removal of native peoples from the western landscape. Framing of the natural world and the intentional display of native peoples and aspects of their material culture within national parks in the early to mid twentieth century provides a correlation for how non-native audiences perceived of, and continue to perceive of, native peoples as a culture in antiquity. Depictions of native culture within national parks during this period reinforced in the American conscience the treatment of Native Americans in public arenas as a vanishing people to be studied and observed, not unlike how Native cultures had been portrayed and interpreted in natural history museums prior to the late twentieth century.

In *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks*, Mark David Spence correlates American perceptions of what the natural world provides for its people, and whom it should provide for, with defining a racialized American identity.[125] The influence of Manifest Destiny and a racial cleansing of the American landscape during the early- to mid-1800s spurred American associations with tribal communities as a people of the past. With particular attention to the creation and management of Glacier National Park, Montana in 1910, Spence acknowledges that the enforcement of National Parks programs influenced by early-nineteenth century white settlement blatantly curtailed and eventually excluded the Blackfeet from the use of the park's backcountry throughout the mid-to-late nineteenth

[125] Mark David Spence, "From Common Ground: Introduction," in *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 5.

century.[126] He argues that, "as past-tense Indians, Blackfeet men and women who entertained tourists were presented as living history museum specimens who no longer used the Glacier wilderness if, in fact, they ever did."[127] It was known that there was still a strong native presence within national park areas, but their use of the landscape and its resources became something of speculation for tourists visiting the region.

From this notion of native peoples interacting with the landscape in areas which were sanctioned by the federal government for preservation purposes, American tourists viewed Native Americans as an oddity within their own cultural framework. To non-Native Americans, the fact that tribal communities did not share the same understandings of the natural landscape shaped their beliefs that Native Americans were resistant to the cultural ways of American civilization. Therefore, as Spence argues, "those Indians which continued to use the park illegally were simply un-American in their lack of appreciation for the national park and almost barbaric in their unwillingness to let go of traditional practices."[128] Conflicting worldviews of ownership and use of the natural landscape within areas that had been demarcated as national parks led to increasing unrest from tourists who sought the use of these parks as areas of refuge from the stresses of urban life. For the tourists coming into these natural wilderness areas, their expectations were not to interact with Native peoples that were using the resources within the

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[126] Mark David Spence, "Backbone of the World: The Blackfeet and the Glacier National Park Area," in *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 71.

[127] Ibid, 71-72. Spence applies the notion of spectacle to the natural world in relation to national parks, and by extension, to native peoples themselves. American perceptions of native peoples once reflected fear of savagery and hesitation to upheave tribal communities, prior to the increased establishment of national parks throughout the western United States. As this became more widespread, American perceptions of native peoples reflected that of novelty and thereby influenced the passing of legislation which would exclude these peoples from accessing their homelands, as the threat of Indian warfare against white settlers was no longer present.

[128] Ibid, 71. The framing of space as an American ideal continues into the present day, and continues to be a contentious subject area. Nationalism played a strong role in the creation of national parks throughout the twentieth-century, as it continues to do within areas of mass tourism. The influx of American tourists into areas that neighbor tribal communities continues to shape the way that historical markers, signage, and architecture are framed in a way that attracts non-Native viewers; this concept is thoroughly examined within Natchee Blu Barnd's *Native Space: Geographic Strategies to Unsettle Settler Colonialism.*

area. Rather, their expectations were to encounter only flora and fauna native to those surroundings. The absence of Native peoples within national parks became a primary motive for industrialists and legislators looking to expand and preserve these areas for only their use, thus defining what it meant to be an American in the early-twentieth century.

The presence of Native Americans in national parks decreased as federal legislation was enacted to uproot and relocate tribes that interfered with tourists' sublime experience with the natural world. March 1, 1872 marked the signing into law of The Yellowstone National Park Protection Act, a piece of legislation which stipulated that the natural areas within the border of Yellowstone National Park were to be preserved and only interacted with in a passive and recreational manner.[129] Indigenous residents were prohibited from utilitarian use and occupation of the landscape, which established a precedent for prospective national parks to continue to discriminate against and negatively impact indigenous communities. From this legislation, two environmental schools of thought regarding land management practices emerged: preservation and conservation.

Spence notes that one of the most prominent naturalist writers of the mid-nineteenth century, Henry David Thoreau, had little to no impact on John Muir's perspectives of native peoples.[130] Thoreau advocated for the preservation of native peoples and their natural world in his writings, emphasizing how non-native Americans could glean much from discovering and getting in touch with their wildness as native peoples lived. Spence points out that, "Thoreau spoke of wildness as a quality that all people should possess, a quality he felt was most clearly

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[129] U.S. Department of the Interior, "Birth of a National Park," (September 17, 2019), National Park Service, web, accessed September 23, 2019, https://www.nps.gov/yell/learn/historyculture/yellowstoneestablishment.htm.
[130] Spence notes Thoreau's respect for Native Americans within his own time, writing that Thoreau believed that Native Americans "could teach him much about living deliberately;" "Looking Backward and Westward: The "Indian Wilderness" in the Antebellum Era," in *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 22.

understood and appreciated by native peoples."[131] Racist undertones were inherent in nineteenth century preservationist thought, as the creation of unrealistically pristine natural landscapes for recreational use by urban Americans necessitated the removal of indgenous peoples. In response to his observance of natives living within and hunting upon Yosemite, Spence mentions that "Muir could not feel the 'solemn calm' of wilderness when he was in their presence."[132] As significant a role as Muir held in shaping the field of environmental preservation, his misgivings over the presence of native peoples within national parks was present in his opinions of how land should be used, and who should be allowed to use it. Native peoples were thus regarded as a feature of the North American landscape that could either be included or excluded based upon the decisions of dominant settler societies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In *Gifford Pinchot: Selected Writings*, Char Miller traces the chronology of land management practices and forestry management practices during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries through the accomplishments of American Conservationist Gifford Pinchot. Miller presents Pinchot as an advocate for strong federal management of natural landscapes, with specific attention to the regulation of natural resources. These responsibilities of federal agencies to regulate natural resource use stemmed from the greater movement of the clearing of western landscapes for the creation of national parks that continued throughout the twentieth century. Miller illustrates the role that Pinchot served in influencing environmental conservation in the late nineteenth century:

> Establishing this supervisory state took some doing, work that was not Pinchot's alone; its creation was one of the hallmarks of the Progressive Era and the reformist energies that animated it. Pinchot was in close touch with many of these like- minded women and men, including Jane Addams, Louis Brandeis, Theodore Roosevelt, John Muir, Charles Beard, Florence Kelley, Stephen S. Wise, and a

[131] Ibid, 22.
[132] Mark David Spence, "The Heart of the Sierras, 1864-1916," in *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 109.

> host of others pressing for a more conscientious government and beneficent society. His particular contri-bution to their shared crusade—forestry—only appeared to be disconnected from the social questions that shaped the others' actions.[133]

During the Progressive Era, federal authorities intervened in the formation of the western United States and the use of its natural resources, but continued to be a fledgling entity in its inception of conservation legislation. Miller acknowledges that, "the 1891 Forest Reserve Act had granted the president the authority to designate forest reserves but had not identified whether or how these lands were to be managed."[134] As such, a number of contemporary conversations were consulted to resolve the issue of land management practices in the United States, two of which included Pinchot and staunch naturalist, John Muir.

Pinchot directly confronted John Muir in the debate regarding the construction of the Hetch Hetchy Dam on public lands in 1913. Miller explains that, "Pinchot's testimony concerning the possible construction of a dam in the Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite National Park offered a direct challenge to John Muir and other preservationists who argued that no dam should be built inside a protected national park."[135] From Muir's perspective, the building of a dam directly across land that had been set aside for the preservation and recreation of American tourists was unthinkable, as it only served to sever an idealistic rendering of the western landscape from its natural personification. Miller then expresses how, "for Pinchot, utility—that is, the provision of publicly owned water and hydropower for an earthquake-shattered San Francisco—took precedence over Muir's no less powerful aesthetic claims made in an attempt to halt the remote valley's inundation."[136] On June 25, 1913, Pinchot addressed the Committee on

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[133] Gifford Pinchot and Char Miller, *Gifford Pinchot: Selected Writings*, (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2017), 6-7. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1491200&site=eds-live&scope=site.
[134] Ibid, 32.
[135] Ibid, 187.
[136] Ibid.

Public Lands regarding the construction of the Hetch Hetchy Dam, having spoken with John Raker, Democratic Representative of California.[137] During the interview, Raker asked Pinchot if he was aware of Muir's militant opposition to the building of Hetch Hetchy and governmental involvement in altering formerly preserved western landscapes:

> Yes, sir; I know him very well. He is an old and a very good friend of mine. I have never been able to agree with him in his attitude toward the Sierras for the reason that my point of view has never appealed to him at all. When I became Forester and denied the right to exclude sheep and cows from the Sierras, Mr. Muir thought I had made a great mistake, because I allowed the use by an acquired right of a large number of people to interfere with what would have been the utmost beauty of the forest. In this case I think he has unduly given way to beauty as against use.[138]

All in all, however, Pinchot acknowledged the implementation of a dam for the provision of communities in need of fresh water should not inhibit the overall sustainability and integrity of the national park and that its resources should not be exhausted in order to provide for those communities.

These environmental schools of thought, preservation and conservation, shaped and refined Americans' perception of their natural world, in terms of how they would choose to approach the management of its resources and the ownership of natural landscapes. For indigenous communities who had lived and thrived upon these very landscapes for centuries, their disenfranchisement from these shared landscapes and from providing authority on proper land management practices upon those landscapes reinforced for them that they did not fit within the framework of popular stereotypes of what it meant to be an American. Through this rationale, early-twentieth century environmental schools of thought influenced the further removal of indigenous peoples from their lands so that those landscapes could either be preserved or managed for the utilization of non-native American citizens. Racism and

[137] Within the footnote on page 188, Miller notes that "Rep. Raker is noteworthy for having introduced the legislation to clear the way for the dam and for filing the bill that would establish the National Park Service."
[138] Ibid, 189.

discrimination regarding class inequality were inherent in the formation of ideal American landscapes throughout the late nineteenth century, and thus, the formation of the National Park Service in the early twentieth century. Each of these schools of thought and the passing of several pieces of environmental legislation throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries gradually and blatantly reinforced the removal of indigenous peoples and the attempted erasure of indigenous cultures from the North American landscape.

National parks can thereby be equated to museums in the ways that these sites actively illustrate the history of ecological, social, and cultural changes experienced by the Native communities that lived upon these federal borders during the late nineteenth and early to mid twentieth centuries. These natural museums help to concretely broaden interpretations of Native American history and environmental history by bringing to the forefront contemporary issues that continue to affect tribal communities in the present. In *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History*, ethnohistorian Shepard Krech III dispels mystical interpretations of indigenous peoples and their presence within the North American landscape prior to the twentieth century by contextualizing their humanity through their interactions with the environment. While Native Americans have traditionally been represented as a people that show spiritual reverence for the natural world and its resources, Krech explains that "American Indians were also close to the land in a physical sense, befitting dependence on it. To guarantee sustenance, shelter, and security, they killed animals, cut trees, and cleared and farmed lands for domesticated seeds, or for ends related to communication or their enemies."[139] According to Krech, indigenous peoples were some of the truest ecologists and conservationists to engage with the North American landscape prior to the twentieth century, as their knowledge of the environment was inextricably

[139] Shepard Krech III, *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1999), 211.

bound up within their cultural belief systems. He writes that, "knowledge is cultural, and each group in its own way made the environment and its relationships cultural. Their ecologies were premised on theories of animal behavior and animal population dynamics unfamiliar to Western science."[140] Because their views of ecological management did not align with those of twentieth century American preservationists and conservationists, Native communities were effectively ushered out of the landscapes that they had effectively managed and helped to foster throughout centuries prior.

The increasing influence of the National Park Service throughout the early twentieth century more easily facilitated the dispossession of indigenous peoples from their ancestral homelands. Once initiated, the widespread removal of indigenous populations from North American landscapes brought about the collective dehumanizing of Native peoples through the dismantling of their traditional connections to the physical world. "Yet throughout the five-hundred-year history of imagery of indigenous nobility," Krech elaborates, "is a rich tradition whereby the Noble Indian--is a foil for critiques of European or American society."[141] Contemporary tensions regarding authority over the management of federal and tribal landscapes is best exemplified through an examination of the National Park Service and its subsequent creation of natural museums across the country. Similarly to the perspective expressed by Lakota activist Vine Deloria, Jr., Krech explains that, "many since 1970 have excoriated American society for all the environmental damage in Indian Country, and pointedly charged white people of environmental racism and 'radioactive colonialism.'"[142] National parks thus exemplify the disenfranchisement of indigenous populations from their landscapes throughout the late

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[140] Ibid, 212.
[141] Ibid, 214.
[142] Vine Deloria, Jr., *We Talk, You Listen: New Tribes, New Turf*, (New York: Macmillan, 1970), 186, referenced in Krech III's *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History*, 214.

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and continue to act as mediums for interacting with complicated and negative historical and social changes within both the recent past and the present.[143] These spaces, very consciously curated to satisfy the expectations and desires of predominantly non-Native visitors, serve as reminders of the ways in which Native populations have been forced to adapt to cultural and environmental changes in order to redefine their connections within a sense of traditional place.

Human choices in the framing of the natural world stem from the need to enforce and protect cultural norms on the terms of a society's expectations of itself. Societal projections onto the natural world have altered more than the physical North American landscape itself, but have influenced the creation of multiculturalism through a forced blending of Native and non-Native groups. In *Native Space: Geographic Strategies to Unsettle Settler Colonialism*, Natchee Blu Barnd introduces a term known as *indigeneity*, by which historians interpret geographic interactions with physical space through an examination of those spaces which were and continue to be Native spaces associated with the racialized grouping of "Indian" within the United States.[144] "By focusing on the fundamental relationship between indigenity and space," Barnd rationalizes that, "we can gain an understanding of how indigenous geographies operate as crucial acts of self-determination and cultural continuity."[145] Barnd references the work of Ania Loomba, literary scholar and professor at the University of Pennsylvania, to explain how settler colonialism affected multiple levels of native societies facing cultural changes. Barnd states, "as Ania Loomba explains, for settler colonialism to exist, "the process of 'forming a community' in

[143] Spence equates national parks, such as that of Yellowstone and Glacier, with centers of patriotism in "Crowning the Continent: The American Wilderness Ideal and Blackfeet Exclusion from Glacier National Park," *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 86.
[144] Natchee Blu Barnd, *Native Space: Geographic Strategies to Unsettle Settler Colonialism*, (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2017), 4.
[145] Ibid, 2.

the new land necessarily meant un-forming or re-forming the communities that existed there already, and involved a wide range of practices including trade, settlement, plunder, negotiation, warfare, genocide, and enslavement.'"[146] To rationalize their sense of place within the New World, colonial settlers necessarily renamed their surroundings in a manner that made sense to them within their time. Regardless of Native perceptions of geographic space, non-Native settlers applied to the natural world their own descriptions of it in a way that culturally appropriated the landscape and American identity.

To elaborate on the processes by which settler colonialism propagates the cultural appropriation of the natural world, Barnd references the findings of Henri Lefebvre in *The Production of Space*. Barnd traces the historical origins of appropriating Native and non-Native spaces through the development of mapmaking. In rationalizing what appropriates geographic spaces as Native or non-Native, Lefebvre connects the creation of these spatialities with individual and collective processes enacted over time, which determines the significance of these spaces economically and spiritually.[147] Barnd regards Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* as a seminal work in determining geographic space, writing that Lefebvre "argues that capitalism generates abstract space out of land and out of the intimate relationships people hold with the land. Along with the development of technologies like maps, the abstraction of space produces specific kinds of human-land engagement."[148] Because non-Native settlers laid claim to a new physical landscape, their need to define their surroundings stemmed from an innate desire to

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[146] Ibid, 7. Barnd references Ania Loomba's *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (2015), in which Loomba addresses how dominant colonial enactors of change actively altered the geography of Native spaces to align them with that of their own belief systems. As such, their conceptions of land use and ownership infringed upon Native ones. The restructuring of the physical world then translated to the restructuring of the social world, as Native traditions were replaced with Western customs. Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism: The New Critical Idiom*, 3rd ed., (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015).

[147] Ibid, 13. Barnd employs the constructions of Henri Lefebvre in rationalizing human spatialities with the natural world to analyze how geographic spaces became Native and non-Native in their significance. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1991).

[148] Ibid, 21.

rationalize those surroundings in a manner that corresponded to the worldview with which they arrived in North America. As a result, the renaming of what were formerly Native spaces aided in the reconstruction of space, and gradually, the redefining of American identity.

Natchee Blu Barnd examines an element of material culture which aids one in the understanding of what comprises Native space, street names and signs. He asserts that, "street names and signs are one of the most common and obvious, and yet most thoroughly ignored, makers and markers of space."[149] Human perceptions of organizing and restructuring the natural landscape led non-Native mapmakers to create these documents in a manner that corresponded to their Eurocentric expectations of what the North American landscape would come to represent. As such, Barnd emphasizes that street names and signs "tell us what is recognized, what is valued, and how."[150] As significant markers of material culture, the framing of Native and non-Native geographic spaces through the inclusion or absence of street names and signs is representative of the cultural values of a particular region. In particular, Barnd highlights the utilization of street names and signs in Cherokee, North Carolina for their structural organization and for their effectiveness in their ability to garner tourism within the local community as well as represent the values of Native residents living within the Qualla Boundary. Barnd remarks how "in the town that serves as tribal headquarters for the Eastern Band Cherokee, the street names and signs use a complex combination of English, Cherokee, and the Cherokee syllabary."[151] He further elaborates that "the graphic presentation of the Cherokee syllabary on street signs prioritizes Native language speakers and language maintenance practices, rather than "outside" sign readers."[152] This is significant, as the inclusion of street names and signs in the exhibits at

[149] Ibid.
[150] Ibid.
[151] Ibid, 40.
[152] Ibid.

the Museum of the Cherokee reflects a conscious effort to address multiple audiences living within and travelling throughout the region. Barnd holds this structural design in high regard, as he notes how the conscious decision to include both translations of Cherokee syllabary, as well as the syllabary itself, on street signs discourages the exclusion of non-Native outsiders. He expresses how, the "legibility of the syllabary is limited both within and outside of the Eastern Cherokee community, even as the Eastern band is invested in a number of efforts aimed at regaining Cherokee language fluency and literacy."[153] This is culturally significant in the determining of geographic space, as the values of both tribal residents and non-Native residents each influence the inclusion of material culture within the region. The demarcation of authentically Native and non-Native spaces institute a basis for tourist appeal, and by association, the commercialization of Native cultures.

The objectification and speculation of native cultures is again addressed by Spence in *Dispossessing the Wilderness*, as he connects the framing of national parks and the aesthetic with which they were traditionally presented in with fostering publicity of the western landscape and Americans' fascination with wilderness. Within Yosemite National Park, Spence examines the methods by which various enactors influenced public opinion of the western landscape and its native residents. The most significant means of this examination is through his usage of "Indian Field Days" to highlight increased American consciousness of which subjects and objects belonged within Yosemite. Publicity surrounding the presence of tribal groups within the park associated with tourists a subconscious expectation of native peoples as "wild" or archaic.[154] Indian Field Days facilitated North American audience expectations of their native counterparts,

[153] Ibid, 41. Barnd includes a photograph within Chapter 1 (Figure 1.4) which depicts the use of both English text and Cherokee syllabary on a street sign to visually contextualize regional tourism. Photograph courtesy Amanda Green.

[154] Mark David Spence, "Yosemite Indians and the National Park Ideal, 1916-1969," in *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 116.

specifically in relation to their appearance. Spence illustrates this point well with his inclusion of a 1925 photograph featuring two native women wearing "full Indian costume" that they were instructed to wear when interacting within these complex, and problematic, cultural mediums.[155] The costuming of indigenous peoples exhibited direct control over the ways in which their cultures were to be portrayed to the general public.[156]

A strong correlation exists between the influence of tourism upon the framing of both natural and domestic cultural spaces. From the perspectives of both Spence and Barnd, it is easier to understand why the commercialization of tribal histories continues to pose issues for those involved within the curation and management of museums, historic sites, living history museums, and national parks. Southwest historian Shelby J. Tisdale provides an explanation for Spence and Barnd's findings in her article, "Railroads, Tourism, and Native Americans in the Greater Southwest," in which she connects industrial development and expansion throughout the western United States with the disenfranchisement of native peoples and the commodification of their cultures thereof. Tisdale explains how, "at the turn of the twentieth century, travelers were anxious to get to destinations and to experience something of the untamed wilderness and the 'noble savage' along the way. They wanted to see personally how the 'other' lived, while maintaining a safe distance from them."[157] Tisdale notes that in the 1880s the railroad system "hastened the introduction of capitalism in the West, widened trade networks, and engaged Native Americans in wage work and a cash economy," which in turn begot the need for the

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[155] Ibid, 118; *Indian Field Days*, 1925, *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks* by Mark David Spence, 1999. Courtesy Yosemite National Park Research Library.

[156] The concept of "chiefing," in which indigenous peoples would dress in nontraditional regalia to mock tourists' fascinations with the costuming of American Indians, is addressed by Spence in his examination of the Blackfeet tour of New York. This emphasizes means of Native rebellion and survivance, in opposition to their dispossession by the federal government. Mark David Spence, "Crowning the Continent: The American Wilderness Ideal and Blackfeet Exclusion from Glacier National Park," in *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 83.

[157] Shelby J. Tisdale, "Railroads, Tourism, and Native Americans in the Greater Southwest," *Journal of the Southwest* 38 (1996): 433.

commodification of native made crafts and goods to sell to incoming tourists.[158] The expansion of the Santa Fe Railway across the southwestern United States fostered a market for the production and distribution of indigenous cultural pathways to an outside audience.

The growth of regional tourism in the American Southwest during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries contextualizes the framing of native spaces and cultural resilience, as Tisdale acknowledges in her comparisons of intertribal trade and barter relationships:

> The railroad brought tourists, who clamored for Indian-made goods to take home with them as gifts for friends and relatives, and as mementos of their trip "out west." Tourism created the market demand for "Indian-made" crafts from the Southwest, and the indigenous inhabitants supplied the product. Concomitant to this process, however, was the curtailment of many previous economic activities, such as the production of handmade utilitarian wares; in particular, the pots and baskets that were used for domestic purposes. Intertribal and intratribal trade and barter throughout the region was also diminished by this new economy. A growing number of native peoples became laborers and full-time artisans in order to earn the cash required to purchase the manufactured goods they desired.[159]

Although the original structure of trade relationships of tribes across the American Southwest were altered with the influx of tourism and high market values for indigenous crafts in the early twentieth century, the ways by which these goods were produced allowed native peoples to retain their traditional methodologies of creating material culture representative of their individual societies and cultural beliefs. The production of tourist goods on a massive scale negatively impacted the greater scope of material culture produced by indigenous tribes of the southwestern United States, however, as a focus on crafting utilitarian goods was overshadowed by a desire to fulfill the demands of a regional sub-industrial market.

The commodification of indigenous items, such as pottery, baskets, and artwork, for sale to non-Native Americans visiting various national parks created an association with cultural appropriation and the wilderness ideal of the mystical existence indigenous communities within

[158] Ibid.
[159] Ibid, 434.

these national landscapes. The appropriation of indigenous cultures reinforced within the American consciousness throughout the twentieth century that Native Americans were dependant upon convenience in supporting wilderness ideals steeped in romantic reckonings of the natural world, and could be reintroduced into those landscapes as they were needed to fulfill aspects of this aesthetic. An assumed control over the expression of native cultures by both the federal government and private entities emphasizes blatant racism against indigenous communities in the creation and expansion of the national parks. The display and appropriation of Native peoples and their material culture in national parks thus parallels that of that of the display and appropriation of Native artifacts within North American history museums and living history sites in the interpretation and defining of modern indigenous cultures and identities.

CONCLUSION

Incorporating Native Voices: Creating a More Representative Social History of Indigenous Peoples

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The portrayal of indigenous cultural histories in North American history museums and living history sites throughout the twentieth century has been directed towards non-Native audiences. Stereotypical representations of Native societies as a people of the past throughout the better part of the twentieth century have been psychologically damaging for tribal communities in the present, as their identities had been partially formulated under the pretense of a culture in extinction. Political scientist and member of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation, Glen Sean Coulthard, addresses in *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition,* how assimilation narratives that have depicted Native survivance as devoid of conscious efforts to maintain cultural resilience following Indian Removal have inflicted emotional pain upon modern indigenous communities, and resulted in a collective lack of the sense of self, both as a tribal member and an American citizen.[160] To facilitate healing of these psychological wounds, North American history museums and living history sites in the twenty-first century must continue to be more inclusive with the narratives and material culture they choose to feature within their interpretations of indigenous cultures and respond to the needs of the tribal communities they choose to serve.

The Museum of the Cherokee Indian and the Museum of the Southeast American Indian each have adopted a progressive curatorial approach to the ways in which they frame and present both Cherokee and Lumbee cultures to contemporary audiences. What makes these museums

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[160] Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

successful in their representations of each of these tribal histories is their attention to incorporating an acknowledgement of victimization within the greater framework of the survivance narratives that reflect a contemporary rendering of both Cherokee and Lumbee societies in the present.[161] To redress and discredit harmful stereotypes of victimization, such as indigenous peoples as children of nature, uncivilized and unconverted, the curatorial staff of the Museum of the Cherokee Indian and the Museum of the Southeast American Indian continually remove interpretations of their histories from the context of Native peoples as mystical beings. The approach that these two institutions take in the portrayal of tribal histories to the public breaks the former mold in which the cultures of indigenous peoples were framed in a way that supported the antiquation of their practices and existence within the natural world by consciously portraying narratives which contextualize continuous cultural adaptations over time.

In "Indian Peoples and the Natural World: Asking the Right Questions," Richard White offers a counterargument to the assertions of Calvin Martin in works such as *The Way of the Human Being* and *Keepers of the Game*, in which Martin adopted a sympathetic view of indigenous peoples and their interactions within the natural world.[162] Addressing a philosophical aspect of the study of Native peoples and their cultures, White draws on the perceptions of ethnohistorians and environmental historians to establish a framework of how Native peoples have been regarded in academia for the past forty years. What is most compelling about White's

[161] In *Decolonizing Museums*, Amy Lonetree emphasizes the significance of tribal and nontribal museums including survivance narratives out of more common portrayals of victimization narratives, as one can not be fully expressed or contextualized without the other. Lonetree explains that the concept of Native survivance was "advanced by Gerald Vizenor, a White Earth Ojibwe writer and literary scholar" in *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999)*; Amy Lonetree, "Two: Collaboration Matters," in *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 34.

[162] Calvin Martin contrasts Native worldviews with Western worldviews regarding human relationships with the natural world in *The Way of the Human Being*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999. Martin's *Keepers of the Game: Indian-Animal Relationships and the Fur Trade* serves as a controversial source among ethnohistorians and Native American scholars, regarding his portrayal of the compartmentalization of Native peoples within mythic and environmental contexts; Calvin Martin, *Keepers of the Game: Indian-Animal Relationships and the Fur Trade*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982.

interrogative style is that he disassembles the traditional landscape which Calvin Martin and other ethnohistorians from the twentieth century placed Native peoples into by simply investigating foremost why historians perceive of Native peoples in this manner. To overcome these stereotypical associations of Native peoples within an antiquated wilderness, White advocates for the incorporation of oral histories. By placing the authority of storytelling within their hands, public historians are much more able to bring to fruition the efforts of Native peoples relaying their tribal histories to the public.

If implemented successfully, White suggests that the ways in which the general public will perceive of Native peoples in the twenty-first century will be much more informed and modern than perhaps previously influenced by outdated associations of Native peoples as stewards of nature. This is a popular association with Native American cultures, to be certain. But where did these associations arise from? White argues that "no serious historical methodology can proceed without critically examining the concepts it is putting into play, and few terms in contemporary discourse are more contested than *nature* and *Indians*."[163] In translating the writings of romantic ecologist Raymond Williams, White surmises that nature "is an idea that shifts and changes over time. What we choose to call nature is culturally and historically specific. You can touch deer, elk, or rocks, but you cannot touch nature."[164] An association of American Indians with nature thus stems from a cultural bias, rather than historical fact. He further clarifies that historians "cannot begin our search for what various Indian groups thought about nature without leaving open the possibility that they did not think about *nature* at all. Certainly, they thought about deer, rain, fog, water, corn, camas roots, and all kinds of other

[163] Richard White, "Indian Peoples and the Natural World: Asking the Right Questions" in *Rethinking American Indian History*, ed. Donald L. Fixico, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997), 89.
[164] Ibid.

nonhuman objects, but they did not necessarily group them together in the category *nature*."[165] It is at this stage that historians need to turn to oral histories for the completion of gaps in our understanding of how American Indian societies interacted with both the natural world around them, and the altered landscape that they created from their own existence within it.

White raises yet another issue that proves problematic for ethnohistorians attempting to derive from primary documentation the meanings of historically documented terms, primarily that of *Indian* itself. He explains how, "much of the older literature proceeded on the supposition that there was a rather unproblematic racial identity and common outlook attached to the word *Indian*...But if the term *Indian* has been problematized, much popular and indeed much academic history still proceeds on the assumption that there was a coherent "Indian" attitude toward *nature*."[166] He deduces that there was, and still is, an inherent gravitation towards an umbrella term among historians because it universalizes a pan-traditional identity and simplifies the task of placing American Indian societies within a framework that is cohesive with those of non-Native societies. White rationalizes how, "this tendency to universalize and essentialize *Indian* can take quite specific environmental forms. Indians can be constructed, for instance, as the antithesis of history, which, in turn, is constructed as the antithesis of nature."[167] Because narratives of American Indian history often misconstruct the realities and beliefs systems of American Indians themselves, White acknowledges that the habituation of non-Native scholars interpreting Native histories from the perspectives of foreign cultures has been difficult to abandon. He elaborates on the ways by which modern historians are attempting to reconcile these vast interpretations of Native histories by writing, "since Indian peoples themselves left us very few records, we rely largely on records produced by non-Indians and on much more recent

[165] Ibid.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Ibid, 90.

accounts left by Indians...This embracing of an unchanging tradition is, however, so extreme that it virtually negates history itself. It brackets off a part of culture so as to make it immune from the changes affecting everything around it."[168]

It is in this regard that White asserts that Native cultures have been historically trapped within a stasis, and that it is the responsibility of modern historians to publicly acknowledge and share these findings with both academic and general audiences for a greater overall telling of American history within the twenty-first century. Within the learning and exchange thereof of Native languages, there is power. White argues, "language connects with a second way of recovering an Indian view of the world that moves behind the documents. Spatial history concerns the movement of people across the land."[169] So to undermine the prevalence of racist connotations within European documentation of Native peoples, the interpretation and documentation of oral histories from Native peoples within the present needs to occur on a much larger scale.

In his examination of spatial histories, White explains that Europeans travelled inland, thus "their records of travel become sources for a spatial history which is not a history of what they discovered, what they believed was already constituted, but instead a history of their movements themselves, of why they went where they did, of how and why they created boundaries. They turned space into place."[170] He acknowledges that when Native peoples were encountered by Europeans they necessarily became actors within those spatial narratives, but that they were not given as much attention within the scheme of European exploration because they were regarded as background until they interfered with foreign expansion, at which point Native peoples are further stereotyped as savage and warlike societies. In reality, the resistance mounted

[168] Ibid, 91.
[169] Ibid, 94.
[170] Ibid.

by Native peoples in a state of culture shock created long-reverberating psychological impacts which continue to hold a role within Native American oral histories in the present day.

Perhaps most significantly, White teases out the relationship that indigenous peoples shared with the natural world and how modern historians perceive of this relationship by employing the findings of environmental historians. Because much of environmental history proves to be interdisciplinary, the descriptions of both landscape and human interaction with it often support aspects of social history which enable ethnohistorians to craft a fuller and more accurate depiction of indigenous cultures. Strategic burning of the landscape is an example of a representative behavior of a certain group of native peoples, but it should not be assumed that this behavior was representative of all native peoples.[171] One of the pitfalls that historians have the potential to fall into is their heavy reliance on the findings of environmental historians, as this may influence social historians to generalize a particular group of people or portray them in a cause and effect manner of reasoning. Additionally, White warns against the reliance upon environmental histories, as these can often inspire social historians to establish the context of their findings within a comparison of the agricultural and land management practices of indigenous peoples with European settlers. What White seems to hint at, but never explicitly addresses, is the degree of agency that the natural world itself maintained despite human interference with environmental processes. Even with the introduction of non-native species of plants and animals, indigenous peoples adapted to their environment in a way that remained culturally relevant to their system of beliefs. To ascertain a fuller rendering of the ways in which native peoples interacted with their natural world, White advises social historians to recognize that ethnological studies must consider the findings of multiple disciplines in order to best reconstruct the experiences of indigenous societies of the past.

[171] Ibid, 96.

In departing from outdated anthropological representations of indigenous societies within natural history exhibitions, Moira G. Simpson, in *Making Representations: Museums in the Post-Colonial Era*, acknowledges the collaborative efforts of the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture, Sante Fe, in its design of a permanent exhibition intended to portray a humanistic view of indigenous experiences in New Mexico. "To facilitate this," Simpson explains, the MIAC "established a planning team of 31 consultants of whom sixteen were Indian. One of the main concerns of the Native American consultants was that the exhibition should highlight the fundamental differences between Indian and non-Indian thinking about the creation...At MIAC, these team members are brought in, paid and treated as full partners in the curatorial planning process."[172] The approach taken by the MIAC in the creation of a permanent exhibition regarding New Mexico native cultures illustrates an inclusive curatorial process, the like which have yielded a more representative interpretation of indigenous histories across multiple institutions.

Simpson also highlights the successes of Seattle's The Burke Museum in enacting effective community outreach. The Burke Museum created a Native Advisory Board, and collaborated with tribal elders and linguists residing in Washington State in the curation of an exhibition regarding cultural heritage. Simpson mentions that, "there was native participation from the very start amongst members of the Lasting Legacy Committee and, early in 1987, the Museum established a Native Advisory Board."[173] Furthermore, she emphasizes that "the Advisory Board did not just have an advisory role, but was given the authority to make final decisions concerning the selection of artefacts and the methods that would be used to display

[172] Moira G. Simpson, "Voices of Authorship," in *Making Representations: Museums in the Post-Colonial Era*, rev. ed., (London: Routledge, 2001), 54.
[173] Ibid, 55.

them."[174] Additionally, Native individuals were given significant positions at The Burke Museum which placed them directly in positions of authority as interpreters of their own culture.

Simpson reinforces that the consultation of and shared curatorship enacted by indigenous communities in interpretative processes "helps to counteract the impression that the museum is the sole voice of authority. By using such methods, an exhibition can provide a more meaningful and relevant picture of traditional societies, inform the public of human rights issues, and provide a forum for debate in which members of the culture portrayed are also given a voice."[175] Museum professionals can only successfully and accurately facilitate these messages to the general public through direct collaboration with indigenous peoples in the interpretation of their cultures and their histories.

Public historians are, in essence, educators. Their role in disseminating the scholarship of Native American ethnohistorians for the general public directly correlates to their ability to interpret the findings of those scholars themselves. Public historians walk a fine line, as they have to intercede between two realms of historical interpretation. The usage of language can be either empowering or limiting for Native scholars in particular, depending on its contextual basis. It is significant for historians to be ever conscious of the ways by which language choice can create barriers between Native peoples, academic audiences, and general audiences. Language choice plays a large role in visitors' ability to interpret and understand the cultural references that a museum sets forth in their presentation of a particular ethnic group. Unquestionably, there should be a positive and continual relationship between public historians and ethnohistorians, as the scholarship derived from both sects of professional history are reliant in some ways upon one another. For those public historians interpreting this scholarship within

[174] Ibid.
[175] Ibid, 60.

the museum field, it is of the utmost importance that they recognize the impact that their interpretations of other cultures has in influencing visitors who approach museums and historic sites as educational forums.

The curation and representation of indigenous cultures in North American history museums coincides with various strategies for museum planning and management offered within *The Museum Educator's Manual: Educators Share Successful Techniques*, allowing me to critically examine the effectiveness of each of the three museums within the comparative analysis in identifying and satisfying their target audiences. The application of these principles devised by practitioners of public history provide a much broader and realistic context for how the histories of marginalized groups are portrayed within museums and living history sites. In regards to each of the institutions examined within this comparative analysis, distinct connections can be made between how the content of each museum is tailored to its visitors and the processes that were undergone by museum staff in choosing to present that content to the public in the manner they found most effective for reaching their specific target audience(s). Effective collaboration among curators, education specialists, archivists, and exhibition designers is prevalent within the curation of each of these institutions within the comparative analysis.

In "Educators on Exhibition Teams," Tim Grove establishes that, "the content expert, the person who knows the subject matter and artifacts the best, is often a curator, historian, or scientist."[176] Because of their research of "the artifacts and documents and other sources that will be the backbone of the exhibition," the content expert calls on the services of an education specialist for how best to communicate those findings to the public in an accessible way.[177] Grove mentions that, "the education specialist contributes knowledge of how people learn in

[176] Tim Grove, "Educators on Exhibition Teams" in *The Museum Educator's Manual: Educators Share Successful Techniques*, (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 65.
[177] Ibid, 65.

informal learning environments; [their] role is to guide conceptual planning, advocate for physical and intellectual accessibility, and help the team identify target audiences and learning objectives."[178] Effective collaboration between the content expert and the education specialist yields a positive museum learning experience for visitors, because it is most often presented through mediums which inspire visitors to engage in active learning. In "White People Will Believe Anything!": Worrying about Authenticity, Museum Audiences, and Working in Native American-Focused Museums," Larry J. Zimmerman addresses the need for indigenous representation within conceptual planning processes in North American history museums, with specific attention given to the education of non-native audiences. Like Grove, Zimmerman analyzes the processes that museum staff take in the curation of educational content and acknowledges that they must present their findings in a way that reflects the authenticity of both the mission of the institution and of their adherence to the inclusivity of otherwise marginalized communities. The caveat that Zimmerman introduces within his example of a native associate curator is that of presumed credibility of native peoples in the representation of their histories. Zimmerman expresses that, "non-Indians, here to include even African, Asian, Latino, and other Americans, especially those interested in Indians, often have at least a bit of 'white guilt' about what happened to Indians that causes them to buy into an idea promoted by some Indians that everything that non-Indians have said about Indians must be wrong."[179] His primary concern lies within the idea of authentic representations of native histories, and how institutions which choose to represent those histories best communicate with both scholarly and general audiences to cultivate authentic representations of those societies. Zimmerman's example serves to illustrate

[178] Ibid.

[179] Larry J. Zimmerman, "White People Will Believe Anything!": Worrying about Authenticity, Museum Audiences, and Working in Native American-Focused Museums," *Museum Anthropology* 33 (2010): 34.

the tenuous relationship that both native and non-native individuals engage in with the authentic portrayal of Native American histories in both public and private museums in the present.

To emphasize their presence in local or national history museums, indigenous peoples must take part in networking strategies which directly involve them with content curation and elements of exhibit design. In "Reaching Out into the Community," Nancy Cutler asserts that, "museums have a smaller impact when their audience is limited to the people who come to them."[180] Awareness of audience demographics and the community that an institution primarily serves is essential for fostering inclusive curation of museum content, as it is their perspectives that will ultimately influence museum staff in the curation of their content. Cutler explains how, "extending beyond the museum walls into the community can demonstrate why a museum matters and benefit both the museum and the community in many ways."[181] With particular regard to Native American history museums, dominant-society institutions have primarily served as repositories of prominent indigenous artifacts. Their interpretations of those artifacts have often been contextualized within colonial narratives that victimize and other the indigenous societies from which those artifacts were collected, or most likely, stolen.

It is in this way of evaluating the reciprocity of native contributions to museum content and the contributions of museum staff in portraying the content received to both native and non-native audiences that Karl A. Hoerig acknowledges the need for indigenous representation in the interpretation of indigenous artifacts from the perspectives of minority groups. In "From Third Person to First: A Call for Reciprocity Among Non-Native and Native Museums," Hoerig again advocates for "interaction among tribal and nontribal museums that moves beyond the collaborative model to one of reciprocal partnership in which nontribal and tribal institutions

[180] Nancy Cutler, "Reaching Out into the Community" in *The Museum Educator's Manual: Educators Share Successful Techniques*, (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 153.
[181] Ibid, 153-154.

work together to integrate [the repatriation of artifacts] in such a manner that the exercise of museum anthropology is at least equally beneficial to native and non-native institutions and audiences."[182] The enactment of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act in 1990 has gradually increased the involvement of native peoples in enriching the field of public history through a collaboration of indigenous communities with archivists, curators, and preservationists of dominant-society institutions.

The reclamation of significant pieces of material culture and human remains from dominant-society institutions has enabled indigenous nations to directly increase their authority in restoring and solidifying their cultural histories within the past thirty or so years. Hoerig acknowledges the opportunities that tribal communities have in reclaiming significant cultural artifacts from dominant-society institutions, noting how "moving beyond the historic and ongoing harms caused by the expatriation of so much Native American material culture, great potential exists for significant value to be realized today through the use of these historic objects in the materials' communities of origin."[183] Although dominant-society institutions are more likely to possess significant pieces of indigenous material culture within their exhibitions on tribal histories, the context of these foregone artifacts would best be established through the efforts of tribal nations in the rationalization and representation of their own histories.

What has historically made, and continues to make, Native women distinct in their possession of particular societal roles? Tasks centered upon the production and crafting of utilitarian objects such as baskets, pottery, clothing, and other significant traditional pieces of material culture made women significant providers for their communities. Hand crafting pottery, for example, represents a means through which to maintain traditional practices and to foster

[182] Karl A. Hoerig, "From Third Person to First: A Call for Reciprocity Among Non-Native and Native Museums, *Museum Anthropology* 33 (2010): 62.
[183] Ibid, 64-65.

matrilineal authority in the furthering of those traditions. In *Cherokee Pottery: From the Hands of Our Elders*, Jane Eastman expresses how, "as one generation of potters teaches another to make the pots needed for their own unique cookery and to satisfy their ritual needs, traditions and distinctive styles develop and are passed on within groups of related potters. The characteristics of pottery vessels often become recognizable markers of cultural identity and an expression of a unique cultural worldview."[184] Design and markings of pieces of pottery are not only utilitarian in nature, but serve as a medium through which cultural expression can occur. M. Anna Fariello responds to Eastman's take on the significance of women in creating pottery, writing, "women held primary responsibility for the homestead, including the cultivation and harvesting of food crops. As an extension of their roles as preparers of foodstuffs, women were also the primary makers of culinary tools."[185] As the primary providers for their families, Native women thus held agency in the formulation and continuation of traditional foodways.

Similarly, Fariello notes the historical significance of basket making as a means of protecting and preserving cultural identity in *Cherokee Basketry: From the Hands of Our Elders*. Prior to European settlement, the Cherokee relied upon rivercane basket making, as it was a natural material that existed in abundance.[186] Fariello explains that, "encoded within an artifact is 'information about how people lived, organized themselves and their work, and thought about their world and how it was changing.'"[187] Continual exposure and accessibility to European materials and methods for basket making altered the traditional process of basket making for those Cherokee that remained after Removal. With an influx of European cultural pathways

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[184] Jane Eastman, "Traditions of the Earth: Introduction," in *Cherokee Pottery: From the Hands of Our Elders*, (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2011), 14.
[185] M. Anna Fariello, "Living Off the Land," in *Cherokee Pottery: From the Hands of Our Elders*, (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2011), 30.
[186] M. Anna Fariello, "Their Baskets," in *Cherokee Basketry: From the Hands of Our Elders*, (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2009), 21.
[187] Ibid, 26.

during the late nineteenth century, Cherokee basket making was adapted to respond to changes in natural resource availability and broadened in style upon increased interaction with backcountry settlers. By the mid-nineteenth century, the Cherokee had begun trading baskets with neighboring white settlers.[188]

Indigenous child rearing responsibilities were encompassed within the practice of basket making, as Fariello mentions how, "as a part of the lives of women, basket weaving was an activity done with children in tow. Basketry skills were passed from mother to daughter within the context of daily life and responsibilities."[189] Daughters observed from a young age a traditional aspect of their gendered cultural structure which would be expected of them in the future. Fariello further expresses, "while men hunted, women had primary responsibility for agriculture. Their role included tending crops, harvesting and processing food, all activities in which baskets played a primary role. It only made sense that women--the main users of baskets--were also their makers."[190] Through traditional doubleweave basket making, Cherokee women, for instance, ensure that those skills will not be lost with time and that this material expression of culture will continue for generations to come.

The primary goal of this thesis has been to establish and refine the next stages to be taken in approaching and furthering scholarship in the fields of public history, Native American history, new social history, gender history, oral history, material culture, museum education, and museum interpretation. Use of this scholarship frames an argument which advocates a more positive reflection of how indigenous peoples have come to increasingly collaborate with public historians within the past thirty to forty years in the sharing of their histories. For the accurate portrayal of their histories, many individuals with native ancestry are tailoring the museum

[188] Ibid, 27.
[189] Ibid, 32.
[190] Ibid, 50.

experiences of outsiders who visit museums and historic sites for the purposes of connecting with familiar concepts or challenging themselves with what is unfamiliar. Each of the institutions examined within the comparative analysis: The Museum of the Cherokee Indian, The Museum of the Southeast American Indian, and the National Museum of the American Indian, consciously incorporate Native survivance narratives that emphasize the cultural resilience of indigenous communities into their curatorial content. Museum professionals working at each of these institutions effectively engage with both members of tribal communities and non-Native visitors in fostering a dialogue which collectively brings the presence of American Indian Nations into a contemporary social context.

As an indigenous public historian, Amy Lonetree contextualizes attention to the incorporation of survivance narratives in North American history museums within the present, expressing how, "it is time for us as communities to acknowledge the painful aspects of our history along with our stories of survivance, so that we can move toward healing, well-being, and true self-determination. Some may argue that discussing this history keeps Indigenous people mired in the horror of victimization and hence entrenched in the victimhood narrative."[191] On behalf of public historians and museum professionals, Lonetree broadly states that, "it concerns me, however, when we fail to provide the context that makes our survival one of the greatest untold stories. Americans--and most of the world--seem somehow stubbornly unaware of what Indigenous peoples on this continent have actually faced."[192] Addressing the victimization of Native societies of the past within North American history museums and living history sites, while difficult, is necessary for facilitating healing processes for Native communities in the present.

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[191] Amy Lonetree, "Introduction: Native Americans and Museums," in *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 6.
[192] Ibid.

The agency of Native American women in the cultivation of tribal heritage is present across each of the institutions examined within the comparative analysis; however, the Museum of the Southeast American Indian sets a standard for the modern representation of women's direct involvement in the fields of museum interpretation and museum education. The all-female curatorial staff of the Museum of the Southeast American Indian represents the advancement of indigenous women into positions of power within the realm of museum management that have been traditionally filled by non-Native men, and effectively curtails the further discrimination of Lumbee tribal representation through a gendered bias that does not emphasize the traditional authority that women possessed in the formation of Lumbee culture. Curators' emphasis on the endurance of traditional Lumbee culture at the Museum of the Southeast American Indian ties into contemporary debates surrounding the authority of marginalized groups in participating in the direct telling and interpretation of their histories at museums and living history sites. The approach taken by curatorial staff in the framing of narratives through material culture reinforces for non-Native visitors the roles that women have historically served in the maintenance of Lumbee heritage.

The Museum of the Cherokee Indian does an equally excellent job of framing and displaying material culture that serves to emphasize the significance of women as providers of Cherokee society. Women are at the center of creation stories, in the formation of traditional foodways and material culture, and in religious and spiritual ceremonies. The roles that women have historically served in child rearing, passing on oral traditions, and creating distinctive pieces of material culture all serve to emphasize the prominence of Cherokee women in being the backbone of their society for generations. On a greater scale, the Museum of the Cherokee Indian addresses the agency that women held within their societies among the Eastern Band of

Cherokee Indians, the Cherokee Nation, the United Keetoowah Band, the Seminole, the Muscogee or Choctaw, Creek, and the Chickasaw. Commonalities between each of these matrilineal societies and how they maintained traditional gender roles, despite Western influence, are exhibited through conscious efforts of the museum to emphasize the distinctiveness of women's work in comparison to that of their European counterparts, who later borrowed from them aspects of their traditional labor practices.

Feminist historians possess perhaps the greatest potential to decolonize popular representations of indigenous women in both public history settings and in academic scholarship, as their fundamental foci of women in positions of power furthers unsettles traditional gendered stereotypes of cultural behaviors based upon those of Western societies. In her biographical work, *Beloved Women: The Political Lives of LaDonna Harris and Wilma Mankiller*, social scientist Sarah Eppler Janda examines the political prominence of both LaDonna Harris and Wilma Mankiller in obtaining national recognition for their tribes and of the needs of indigenous communities as a whole. Being both Indian and female enabled Harris and Mankiller to challenge conventional social norms through their entrance into and reclamations of power within the American political realm of the 1950s-60s. Each of these women brought into focus the significance of Indian beliefs in affecting and shaping modern American social customs and policies through their interaction within congressional hearings and committee hearings regarding the treatment and recognition of indigenous communities. In her analysis of Wilma Mankiller, Janda establishes that she was heavily influenced by "the spirit of activism that defined the era," the 1960s and the early 1970s.[193] Janda further expresses how, "in addition to her budding political consciousness, or perhaps because of it, Mankiller found herself struggling

[193] Sarah Eppler Janda, "Beloved Women Politicized," in *Beloved Women: The Political Lives of LaDonna Harris and Wilma Mankiller*, (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2007), 87.

with her role as a woman and her own sort of "feminine mystique.'"[194] Additionally, Janda notes that "prior to her exposure to feminism, Mankiller felt that something must be wrong with her because she did not find being a housewife fully satisfying. After her divorce, Mankiller struggled to find autonomy and her own sense of self."[195] The influence of feminist ideologies sent an undercurrent through Mankiller, enabling her future successes within Cherokee politics. Janda emphasizes that "Wilma Mankiller's transition from being an activist to working for the Cherokee government and leading community development projects to being a key player in contentious tribal politics is noteworthy," as the account of her prominence in contemporary political realms highlights how gendered associations within tribal leadership roles still cause tension within mainstream modern American society.[196]

The role of marginalized individuals, particularly women of color, in the interpretation of social and cultural histories in North American museums and living history sites has gained increasing awareness in the public history scholarly community throughout the twenty-first century. As progressive as representations of marginalized histories are within these types of institutions in the present, greater involvement on the part of individuals chronically disenfranchised from nationalistic portrayals of their histories is necessary in order to decolonize the content of those institutions. Based upon the initial research of this subject matter, there are many potential venues yet to be explored within the field of public history, and of how these professionals engage in historical communication with both academic and general audiences in the interpretation of marginalized histories.

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[194] Ibid.
[195] Ibid.
[196] Ibid, 90.

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Appendix A

Figure 1. Sky Sampson, WCU's new director of the Cherokee Center. Courtesy Bill Studenc. "Sky Sampson Appointed to Lead WCU's Cherokee Center." (November 29, 2016). Western Carolina University News. Web. Accessed September 2, 2019. https://news-prod.wcu.edu/2016/11/sky-sampson-appointed-lead-wcus-cherokee-center/.

Figure 2. *Spearfinger*, n.d. Sculpture. *Courtesy Ann Ng*. Museum of the Cherokee Indian. Yelp.com Review. Web. Accessed 3 September 2019. https://www.yelp.com/biz_photos/cherokee-museum-of-the-cherokee-indian-cherokee?select=MNoskNNCzRR7W7PbskXM2g.

Figure 3. *Oconaluftee Indian Village: Alice Walkingstick*, n.d. *Courtesy Hunter Library Special Collections*. Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, NC. http://wcudigitalcollection.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16232coll9/id/602.

Figure 4. Alisha Locklear Monroe, Curatorial Technician. Native American Resource Center, The University of North Carolina at Pembroke. *Courtesy Department of American Indian Studies, The University of North Carolina at Pembroke*. https://uncpphoto.smugmug.com/HEADSHOTS/Departments/American-Indian-Studies/i-NJvwvLk/.

Figure 5. Nancy Strickland Fields, Director/Curator. Native American Resource Center, The University of North Carolina at Pembroke. *Courtesy Department of American Indian Studies, The University of North Carolina at Pembroke*. https://uncpphoto.smugmug.com/HEADSHOTS/Departments/American-Indian-Studies/i-ngH4cVT/A.

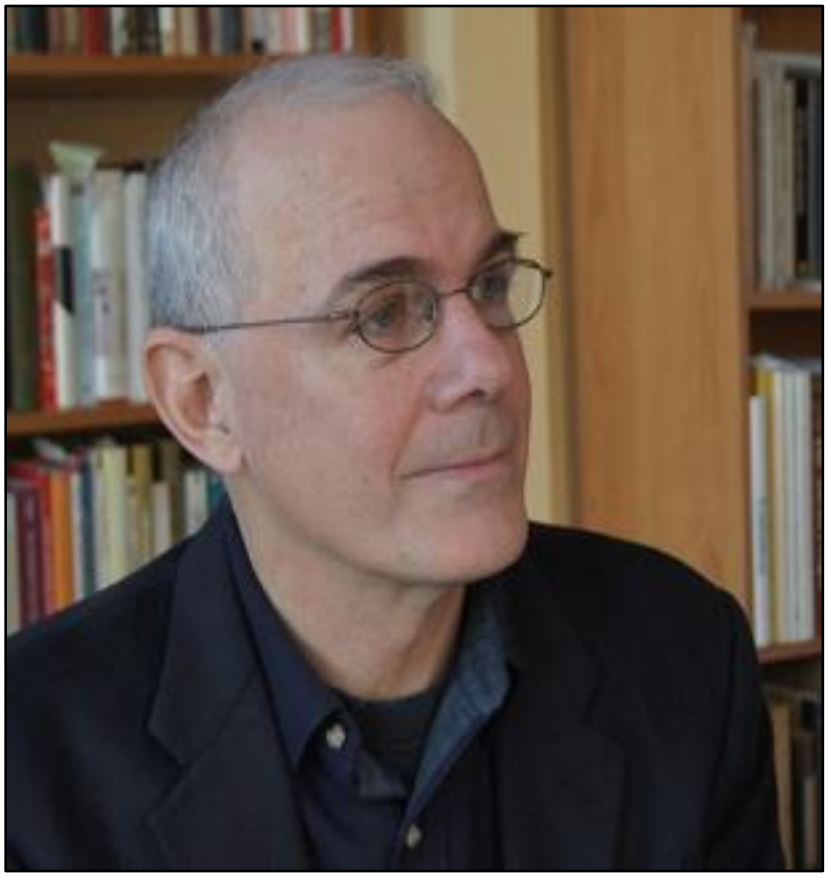

Figure 6. David W. Penney, Associate Director for Museum Research and Scholarship, National Museum of the American Indian. “Faculty Council: David W. Penney.” (n.d.). *Courtesy Otsego Institute for Native American Art History*. http://www.otsegoinstitute.org/faculty-council.html.

Vita

Cheyenne Abigail Williams was born in Winston Salem, North Carolina, to Leon and Lou Ellen Williams in March 1995. She graduated from Surry Community College in Dobson, North Carolina in May 2013. The following autumn, she entered Appalachian State University to study Applied and Public History, and in December 2017 she was awarded the Bachelor of Science degree with a Minor in English. In the spring of 2018, she accepted a teaching assistantship in History at Appalachian State University and began study toward a Master of Arts degree. The M.A. in History with a Concentration in Public History was awarded in December 2019. In January 2020, Ms. Williams commenced work toward an instructional career in History at Surry Community College.

Ms. Williams is a member of Phi Alpha Theta and Pi Gamma Mu. Beyond fostering inclusive student learning within the classroom, she enjoys hiking, playing tennis, and reading. She resides in Dobson, North Carolina with her family.